

Essay On The Scripture Doctrine Of Atonement

Caleb Burge

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ESSAY ON THE SCRIPTURE DOCTRINE OF ATONEMENT: SHOWING ITS NATURE, ITS NECESSITY, AND ITS EXTENT.

By
CALEB BURGE, A.M.
1822

PREFACE

THE following Essay was originally composed without any design or thought of its future publication. The writer was induced to undertake the investigation merely by a hope of obviating certain difficulties, which had hitherto existed in his own mind, whenever he contemplated the doctrine of atonement. These difficulties appeared, on examination, to have arisen, chiefly, from an incorrect, or at least an indefinite, apprehension of the meaning of certain metaphorical language, which is generally used in discussions on this subject. This circumstance is mentioned as some apology for in attempt to exclude the use of such language from the following work.

Perhaps it may be thought, as the writer undertook the work merely with the hope of, removing difficulties from his own mind, it would have been better, if he had remained satisfied with the attainment of that object. So the writer thought, and so would he have done, had it not been for the advice of those an whose judgment he has more confidence than in his own.

The work is now offered to the public, not within expectation of meeting the approbation of those whose prejudices are already enlisted for the support of a different theory; nor with much hope of instructing those who

have viewed the subject through a confused medium so long that they have at length become satisfied with mere general notions and indefinite ideas; but, with a hope of affording aid to common Christians, who, though humble and candid, are still anxious to increase their knowledge on those subjects, which "the angels desire to look into."

If the reader should find any thing in the following pages concerning the correctness of which he entertains doubts, he is requested, as well for his own sake as that of the Author, to refer it to the Bible in preference to any other authority, as a correct standard of religious sentiments.

THE AUTHOR.

GLASTENBURY, April, 1822.

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APPENDIX. REMARKS ON THE DOCTRINE OF UNIVERSAL SALVATION.

RECOMMENDATIONS.

From the Rev. Dr. Emmons.
FRANKLIN, August 27, 1817.

AFTER hearing the Rev. Caleb Burge read his manuscript on the atonement of Christ, I am ready to say that I think he has treated the doctrine with great ingenuity and propriety; and that his Essay is calculated to meet and refute the gross and dangerous errors which have

long and extensively prevailed upon this very important subject. I hope his piece will be published and widely circulated.

NATHANAEL EMMONS.

From the Rev. Dr. Worcester.

SALEM, August 29, 1817.

HAVING so far attended to the Rev. Caleb Burge's manuscript on the doctrine of atonement as to get a view of his plan, his leading sentiments, arguments, and illustrations, and his manner of discussion, I feel no common degree of freedom and satisfaction in expressing an opinion in favor of its publication. The subject, at all times of the highest importance, demands at the present day most particular attention. Mr. Burge's discussion of it appears to be able, luminous, and interesting; and I devoutly hope that the publication will conduce extensively to the honor of God our Saviour, and to the advancement of his gracious and holy cause.

S. WORCESTER.

From the Rev. Dr. Spring.

NEWBURYPORT, August 30, 1817.

HAVING attended to the Essay of Mr. Burge on the atonement, I readily remark that I am peculiarly pleased with his luminous manner of treating the subject. As the salvation of man is the glorious expression of the divine perfections, the writer has permitted the inspired writers to explain themselves and each other upon the cardinal point. The atonement, therefore, as he presents it, is the harmony of the sacred writings; and is calculated to comfort Zion, and administer instruction to sinners.

SAMUEL SPRING.

From the Rev. Dr. Burton.

THETFORD, Sept. 12, 1820.

HAVING heard the Rev. Caleb Burge read the substance of what he has

written on the atonement, I am ready to say that in showing why an atonement for sin was necessary, and in what it consists, he has elucidated the subject more fully and clearly than any author whom I have read; and in every part of it he has reflected to view much light; and I can cheerfully recommend it to the attention of the public, and hope he will consent to publish it for the benefit of the churches.

ASA BURTON.

CHAPTER I: THE SUBJECT INTRODUCED.

THE doctrine of atonement for sin, by Jesus Christ, is unquestionably of primary importance in the gospel system. It is the foundation of all the doctrines of divine revelation which respect the salvation of mankind: the grand pillar on which they are supported. If this fall, these other doctrines must fall with it; but if this stand, the gates of hell cannot prevail against them. It is not improbable, that a conviction of this truth has been a principal cause of that peculiar opposition which wicked men have ever made to this doctrine. Christ crucified was a stumblingblock to the Jews, and foolishness to the Greeks, in the apostolic age; nor has the offence of the cross ceased. Wicked men still feel the same opposition to this fundamental doctrine. It is probable, however, that a view of other doctrines, which necessarily result from this, is a principal occasion of this opposition. It is easy to perceive, that an infinitely wise God would never become "manifest in the flesh," unless it were for the performance of some vastly important work, to accomplish which, the absolute perfection of a God was requisite. And it must also be perceived, that if none other than a being of infinite perfection could take away sin, or make such an atonement for it as would render it consistent for God to pardon sinners, it must clearly follow, that sin is an infinite evil; and if sin be an infinite evil, then sinners deserve endless punishment; and if they deserve endless punishment, and neglect to embrace Jesus Christ, as the gospel requires, then this punishment must be inflicted. But these are truths which the wicked are unwilling to admit.

To get rid of them, some have denied the divinity of the Saviour, and others have rejected the whole system of revealed religion.

Mankind, having by nature a strong attachment to their own works, are unwilling to consider their own righteousness as filthy rags, and come to an Almighty Saviour for pardon. Hence they are under a strong temptation to believe, that the Son of God, instead of coming into the world to make atonement for sin, and open a way of salvation for sinners, came merely to bear witness to the truth, obey the divine law, show that it is good, and capable of being obeyed by man, set a good example, and encourage creatures "to do and live." While it is much to be feared that many have deceived themselves on this subject by yielding to the

feelings of a carnal mind, which is "enmity against God," charity hopeth, that much of the diversity of opinion, which has obtained among professing Christians, may be owing to causes less criminal.

Whether atonement was, in the nature of things, necessary, in order that sinners might be pardoned, or whether it was necessary only because God was pleased to require it; that is, whether God might not have pardoned sinners without an atonement, or any sort of conditions, and without injuring his character, or the interests of his kingdom, if this had pleased him; and if not, what were the reasons which rendered such a procedure improper; whether the atonement, which Christ made, consisted in his obedience, or in his sufferings, or in both united; whether it was made for all mankind, or for the elect only; whether it is, or is not, of the nature of the payment of a debt; whether the sufferings of Christ were the very penalty of the divine law, or, rather, a substitute for the execution of that penalty; and whether the righteousness of Christ must be imputed to believers, that they may be justified and saved, are inquiries which frequently arise among professing Christians. They are inquiries too, concerning, which correct information is highly desirable. The Scriptures are the only source from which such information can be derived. By them we are taught for what purpose Christ came into the world, and also what he has done for the accomplishment of that purpose.

Hence if the plain instructions of the Scriptures are kept in view, it is believed, a satisfactory solution of all such questions may be obtained. Let those Scriptures, then, which speak in plain and simple language of Christ's coming into the world, of the object he came to accomplish, and of what he did and suffered for the attainment of that object, be first examined; and let these be the standard by which to construe those other parts of Scripture which represent this subject in metaphorical language or in rites and ceremonies, which are merely typical.

The necessity of some atonement, in order that sinners may be consistently pardoned, is sufficiently evident from the event of Christ's incarnation and death. For no one can rationally suppose, that the Son of God would have left the bosom of the Father, and the glory which he had with him before the world was, to take on him the form of a servant in this world, and subject himself to the pains and sorrows incident to human life, if such humiliation had not been indispensably necessary, in order

that the purposes of grace, in the salvation of sinners, might be answered. Nor is it supposable that he would have died, in an ignominious manner, on the cross, if such a death could have been dispensed with consistently with such purposes. He earnestly prayed, "O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me! Nevertheless, not "as I will, but as thou wilt!" And considering that the Father heareth him always, it is inconceivable why this petition was not granted, if, indeed, it had been possible; and the designs of God, in the salvation of sinners, could still have been accomplished.

We have, however, more direct evidence concerning this matter. The Scriptures speak of the necessity of atonement in language too plain to be misunderstood. "Without shedding of blood is no remission." Heb. 9:22. "Other foundation can no man lay, than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ." 1 Cor. 3:11. "Neither is there salvation in any other; for there is no other name under heaven, given among men, whereby we must be saved." Acts 4:12. Our Lord himself, speaking of his sufferings and death, taught that it was what must be, that he ought to suffer, and that it behooved him to suffer. "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up." John 3:14. O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory?" Luke 24:25, 26. "Thus it behooved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead on the third day." Luke 24:46.

These plain declarations of Scripture cannot be easily reconciled with the idea that the bare repentance of a transgressor must be available with an infinitely holy God, to procure his pardon. Nor can it be any more easy to reconcile this idea with the commonly received opinion of rectoral goodness, drawn from the judicious conduct of temporal princes, in dispensing pardons and inflicting punishments. Should it be allowed, that repentance and reformation place sinners in the most fit state to receive pardon, and that God is ever disposed to bestow pardon on those who are qualified to receive it, still it would by no means follow, that repentance, however sincere, would, of itself, secure to its subjects divine forgiveness. For many things, in themselves considered, may be desirable, in the view of the Divine Being, which, when viewed in relation to other things, he cannot desire. If sin could be considered as injurious to God, in a private capacity only, we might, indeed, conclude, that since

he is infinitely benevolent, he would readily pardon the penitent. Our confidence in this conclusion would receive support from the rule prescribed for our conduct in cases of private offence. "If thy brother trespass against thee, rebuke him; and if he repent, forgive him." But let sin be considered as committed against God, not in a private, but in a public capacity, as the Governor of the universe, and, certainly, no such conclusion can be fairly drawn.

A benevolent individual might grant an immediate and unconditional pardon of an offence which had been privately committed, in a case where only the offender and himself were concerned; while, at the same time, if he sustained the character of a public magistrate, the same benevolence might lead him to withhold pardon from a criminal, although he should have full evidence of his repentance. If he viewed immorality as a disorder tending to the corruption and ruin of his subjects, his benevolence would, above all things, lead him to adopt the most effectual measures to prevent the evil. Hence he might behold a criminal, in the exercise of unfeigned repentance, in the most fit state to receive pardon; and he might even acknowledge that the penitent criminal, so far as it respected himself, being truly penitent, was qualified to receive forgiveness; he might feel benevolence towards him, and a strong disposition to pardon him; and yet this very benevolence might lead him to inflict the deserved punishment. If he believed that granting pardon, even to the penitent, would give encouragement to transgression, by leading his subjects to entertain a light opinion of the wickedness of transgression, he would withhold his pardon. For his benevolence would no more allow him to exceed the bounds of wisdom in granting pardon, than it would the bounds of justice, in executing punishment. Accordingly, all temporal princes and governors, who have professed a regard for the public good, have ever deemed it necessary to qualify and guard their pardons in such a manner as in their judgment was calculated to extirpate a spirit of disorder, and promote a spirit of loyalty and obedience among their subjects. Indeed, it is the united voice of the civilized world, that it would be unwise and unsafe to dispense pardon in any other way.

It must be evident, therefore, that, before any argument in favor of the absolute pardon of all who repent, can be allowed to result from the natural fitness of the penitent to receive it, or from the disposition of benevolence to bestow it on all who are the subjects of such fitness, it

certainly must be shown, either that sin is no offence, otherwise than as it is an affront offered to God, in a private personal capacity; or, that repentance effectually repairs all the damages which the sin repented of has occasioned, or has a tendency to occasion, in the system of intelligent beings. But neither of these things, it, is apprehended, can be made to appear.

But, in the economy of redemption, pardon is offered to the guilty. On condition of repentance, the gospel promises not only an exemption from punishment, but an eternal inheritance of glory. Yet, what is repentance, that it should thus be available with God? It cannot be thus available, surely, by virtue of its own natural value. For the most which can be said in favor of a sinner who repents is, that, having rebelled, he now gives up his rebellion and returns to his duty. What, then, can this possibly merit? Can it entitle him to the pardon of his sins, for which he actually deserved destruction; and also to a new and glorious state of existence in heaven? Surely the conscience of no repenting sinner, unacquainted with the gospel, would ever suggest a hope of this inestimable good. Yet God has, in his abundant grace, offered and promised not the pardon of sin only, but eternal blessedness and glory also to all who will truly repent. It is, therefore, as unreasonable as it is unscriptural, to suppose that God has done this merely because a state of repentance is the most fit state, in which a sinner can be to receive pardon. Such a state being the most fit, it is obvious, indeed, that the repentance of a sinner is necessary; but it by no means appears, that this is all that is necessary. It shows a reason why repentance is required; but it certainly does not show that it did not behove Christ to suffer in order that the sinner, prepared by repentance, might be consistently forgiven.

The sufferings of Christ constituted the most affecting scene which was ever exhibited on earth. His death was the most grand and awful event which the world ever witnessed. In view of it, the sun withheld his beams, and the heavens were clothed in mourning; the earth trembled, and the graves of the dead were opened. Nature sympathized with her suffering and dying Lord. But, why did it please the Lord thus to bruise his Son? Why did it behove the Son of God thus to suffer? It certainly affords very little satisfaction to answer such inquiries, by resolving the necessity of this august event into the mere sovereign pleasure of Jehovah. If the question were asked, why it is necessary that a sparrow should fall, it

might be a satisfactory answer to say, God has been pleased so to order it; because it cannot be reasonably expected, that God will assign to his creatures, the reasons of his conduct respecting every event, which is of no greater magnitude than this.

But, though events of the smallest magnitude may thus be resolved into the sovereignty of God, it by no means follows, that events of the greatest magnitude may be disposed of in the same manner. The Scriptures assure us, that God loved the Son, and was well pleased in him. How, then, should he smite him, awake the sword against him, and put him to grief? Our feelings revolt at the thought that the Father of mercies should ever be pleased to do this, unless there existed some important reason, some urgent necessity for the affecting procedure. If the Scriptures furnished us with no means of ascertaining what that necessity was, yet, in view of the divine attributes, we should be constrained to believe that such necessity existed. But, thanks be to God, who has not left us in darkness respecting this primary article of our holy faith, he has clearly revealed to us: the reason, why the Son of man must be lifted up; why his cross should be so highly extolled by the inspired writers, and why the blood of sprinkling should speak better things than the blood of Abel. Perhaps there is no one passage in the Scriptures, which more clearly unfolds this great doctrine, than that of the Apostle Paul, Rom. 3:25, 26; "Whom God hath set forth, to be a propitiation, through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins which are past, through the forbearance of God. To declare, I say, at this time, his righteousness, that he might be just, and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus." In this passage, and the context, we have something more than a bare mention of the atonement, or a declaration concerning it; we have rather a development of its nature and necessity. The apostle here expressly informs us, that the sufferings of Christ were necessary, to declare God's righteousness for the remission of sins; that God might be just, and yet the justifier of the sinner, who believeth in Jesus.

There is such a connection between the doctrines of grace, that it is sometimes difficult to illustrate one of them clearly without bringing others into view. This is peculiarly the case with the doctrine of atonement. Two of the points, more immediately connected with this, are total depravity, and justification by grace through faith. These points are illustrated, in the

passage last quoted, and its context, in their natural order and necessary connection. One is mentioned as a ground of the necessity of atonement; and the other as a consequence of atonement. The atonement would never have been necessary, if man had not sinned; neither could sinners ever have been justified by grace, if Christ had not died. The apostle clearly illustrates this order and connection of these leading doctrines. On the subject of depravity, he quotes from the Psalms the following description of the character of man, in his natural state: "There is none that understandeth; there is none that seeketh after God. They are all gone out of the way; they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no not one. Their throat is an open sepulchre; with their tongues they have used deceit; the poison of asps is under their lips; whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness; their feet are swift to shed blood; destruction and misery are in their ways; and the way of peace they have not known; there is no fear of God before their eyes."

From this description of the character of man, the apostle concludes that no flesh can ever be justified by the deeds of the law. "Therefore, by the deeds of the law shall no flesh be justified in his sight." This very naturally leads to the atonement as being necessary to the salvation of any sinner. And, if there is no way in which sinners can be saved, except through the atonement, it plainly follows, that justification must be "freely, by grace," This the apostle states. "Being justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus."

Having thus cleared his way, with much ease and perspicuity he unfolds the nature and necessity of Christ's atonement. "Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past through the forbearance of God." By this it appears, that God could not have declared his righteousness in forgiving sins, if he had not set Christ forth to "be a propitiation." It also appears, that the work of Christ, which was strictly propitiatory, was, he shed his blood; so that if he had not shed his blood, all which he did besides could have made no propitiation. "He was set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood." It appears, moreover, that the nature of the atonement is such, that God cannot appear righteous, in saving any, unless they have faith in Christ's blood. The object for which he was set forth was, "to be a propitiation through faith in his blood." This the apostle teaches us was done, that God might

"declare his righteousness for the remission of sins;" or, in other words, that he might appear righteous in forgiving sins. Having said this he proceeds, in the next verse, to state the same thing again, in language a little different, as if anxious, by all means, to prevent mistakes, on a subject of such importance. "To declare, I say, at this time, his righteousness, that he might be just, and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus." On the whole, it appears evident that the doctrine, which the apostle designed to teach, is this; if God had not set forth Christ to shed his blood for the remission of sins, he could not have been just, in saving sinners; nor can he now, unless they believe in Jesus.

This passage of the apostle will be made the theme of the following discussion. No one will be surprised, therefore, if it should be frequently mentioned, and alluded to, in the course of the work. If the reader is a believer in the correctness and divine authority of the sacred Scriptures, he will readily assent to any thing, which shall be fairly proved from them. In perfect consistency with this, however, he may, if inquisitive, desire to know why God could not have declared his righteousness, if he had pardoned sinners, without setting forth Christ to be a propitiation. He may wish to see the very reasons pointed out, which would have rendered such a procedure inconsistent with a manifestation of divine righteousness; that is, he may wish to see the very thing which rendered atonement necessary, and have the precise obstacles which stood in the way of the sinner's happiness clearly pointed out. If this necessity should be distinctly brought into view, and the obstacles plainly described, he may then wish to know what Christ has done, to meet that necessity and to remove those obstacles. He may also wish to see clearly how what Christ has done meets that necessity, and the precise manner, in which those obstacles are removed. If all this should be accomplished, it will certainly afford him much satisfaction to find the scheme fully supported, by the uniform tenor of inspired truth. How far this is accomplished, in the following essay, is submitted to the judgment of the impartial reader.

CHAPTER II: SOME OBSTACLES POINTED OUT, WHICH STOOD IN THE WAY OF GOD'S PARDONING SINNERS WITHOUT AN ATONEMENT

THAT some atonement was necessary, is so clearly revealed in Scripture, and so evident from the event of Christ's death, that among those who have professed to believe the Bible, it has never been extensively denied. The reasons why it was necessary, have furnished a subject of more dispute. Some have supposed it was necessary to conciliate the divine feelings, and render God propitious. They have imagined, that when man sinned, the anger of God was so enkindled against him, and his indignation so excited, as to exclude from his bosom all compassion towards him, and all disposition to do him good; and hence that the atonement was necessary to cool the divine anger, and to produce in the mind of God, a disposition more favorable to the sinner. In short, that it was necessary Christ should suffer, and die on the cross, that the Supreme Being might become compassionate towards sinners.

But this differs very widely from the view which the Holy Scriptures give us of this subject. They represent the Supreme Being as feeling tenderly compassionate towards sinners, antecedently to the atonement, and as being no more compassionate towards them since Christ died, than he was before. If there had been no atonement, his compassion would have been the same. If atonement had been impossible, or, in the view of infinite wisdom, ineligible, still the divine compassion would have been just as great, as it is now since Christ has died. In this case, though God would have been under a moral necessity of executing the penalty of his law upon sinners, yet he would have felt the same compassion and kindness towards them which he now feels; and if it could have been consistent to do them any good, he would have been as much inclined to do it as he now is.

We have abundant evidence in the death of Christ itself, that his death was not necessary to induce the Supreme Being to exercise benevolence, and the tenderest compassion towards sinners. For surely, if God had not been benevolent, if he had not been gracious, and full of

compassion to sinners, he would never have concerted the scheme of atonement, at infinite expense, to do them good. If he had not already loved the world, it is inconceivable that he should have given his only begotten and well-beloved Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. Accordingly, the Scriptures evidently lead us to view the gift of Christ, to a lost world, as a fruit of that tender compassion, and as a wonderful expression of that love, which God felt towards sinners, before any atonement was made for them. "God commendeth his love towards us, in that, while we were yet sinners, in due time, Christ died for the ungodly." Rom. 5:8. "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins." 1 John 4:10. This same love and compassion, under the influence of which God gave his Son to be a sacrifice for sin, must forever have remained his immutable disposition, even if Christ had never died.

The scheme which supposes atonement necessary that a change might be produced in the personal feelings of the Divine Being or to render him compassionate towards sinners, presents a very unscriptural idea, both of the nature of sin, and of the character of God. It represents sin as being injurious to God in a private personal capacity only; and it represents God as being in the highest degree inexorable. For, if sin be injurious to God in a private personal capacity only, and he be not an inexorable, but a compassionate being, he might certainly pardon, at least as many sinners as repent, without any atonement whatever. But sin should not be considered in this light. It is an offence against God, in a public capacity, as the Supreme Governor of the universe. Hence, notwithstanding God is infinite in benevolence and compassion, he cannot grant pardon to sinners, unless it can be done under such circumstances, and in such a way, as reader it consistent with the highest interest of the great community over which his government extends. "If wisdom obligeth a temporal prince, in his narrow sphere, on several accounts, duly to guard and qualify his pardons; how much more is it reasonable and expedient, that the Father and Ruler of all things, whose government comprehends and inspects the vast systems of intelligent natures that are, and all that, to all eternity, may possibly be; how much more reasonable is it, that he should order the grand dispensation of granting pardons to a sinful world, in a proper and suitable manner."

If, with the difficulties in view which have stood in the way of dispensing pardon, even among temporal princes, we place ourselves back, in our imagination to the time when the parents of our race first sinned, and inquire why God might not continue them in a state of happiness, notwithstanding their transgression, it is believed difficulties in the way, of very serious importance, may be easily discovered. Though we certainly shall find no want of kindness and compassion in the divine feelings, yet other difficulties may readily be perceived, to remove which an atonement was indispensably necessary, as they were, otherwise, wholly insurmountable. God had given his rational creatures a law, as the rule of their conduct, and sanctioned this law with an awful penalty. Instead of continuing obedient to this law, and conforming to this rule, our first parents departed from it, and transgressed. If, in these circumstances, God had directly pardoned them, and continued them in a state of happiness, without any adequate atonement, would not his character have appeared questionable, in the view of other intelligent beings? By such a procedure, would he not have given rational creatures reason to conclude, or at least to suspect, that he had either given them a law which he did not esteem good, or that he was destitute of a disposition to vindicate and support one, which he did esteem good? In this way, then, how could he declare his righteousness? How could he appear just? Perhaps, indeed, on a careful inquiry, it may be found evident, that, if God had pardoned sinners without an atonement, he would have appeared very unjust in several things, which are infinitely important to the universe.

1. He would have appeared unjust to his holy law. It is unjust to treat any thing with less respect than it really deserves. A law cannot be treated with respect, unless it is executed. Every good law ought to be respected; and, therefore, ought to be executed; while a bad law is entitled to no respect; and, therefore, ought not to be executed. Hence, to decline executing any law is to treat that law as a bad one. It is treating it as every wise and good being would treat a bad law. If, then, any being should treat a good law in this manner, he would treat it with great disrespect. He would practically say it ought to be treated as a bad law; which must be exceedingly disrespectful, and of course highly unjust. Every one must see that to treat a good man, who deserves high respect, as a bad man who deserves no respect, would be highly unjust. The case is precisely the same with respect to a law. To treat a good law as a bad

one ought to be treated, is, in the nature of things, as unjust as to treat a good man as a bad one ought to be treated.

Now the law of God is infinitely holy and just and good; and, being such, is infinitely deserving of respect; and, since God is an infinitely just and good being, it must be morally impossible, that he should treat his law in any other manner than it ought to be treated. He cannot treat it disrespectfully. But mankind have sinned, and transgressed this law; for which transgression it condemns them to eternal misery. If, in these circumstances, God had given up the penalty of the law, and offered pardon to guilty man, without an atonement, he would have treated the law precisely as a bad law ought to be treated; and, of course, with the highest injustice and disrespect. But if, when man sinned, God had executed the penalty on him, he would have treated the law with respect, as a good law ought to be treated; and, since the law is perfectly good, this would have been to treat it justly, or as it deserves to be treated. Thus any procedure which should diminish ought from this respect, would be injustice to the law. If, then, the penalty should be remitted, something else must be done, which would manifest for the law as much respect as the complete execution of its penalty; otherwise, the law must be treated unjustly. But if any thing of this kind could be done, then God might grant pardon to sinners without doing any injustice to the law; because, in bestowing pardon in this way, he would show as much respect for his law as he could show by executing its penalty. Any thing which should fully answer this purpose, must be, so far, a complete atonement. It is obvious, therefore, that, if sinners were to be pardoned, atonement was necessary, in order that proper respect might be shown to the divine law.

Besides, if God had pardoned sinners without any atonement, he would not only have treated his law with great disrespect, but he would have utterly failed in the support of its authority. There is no way in which a violated law can be supported, without either executing its penalty, or doing something else, which, as a substitute, will answer the same ends. To neglect the execution of the penalty, when the law is violated, is, in effect, to destroy the existence of the law to which it is annexed; for a law, destitute of authority, is, in reality, no law. But every good law certainly has a just claim upon the lawgiver, to cause its authority to be respected. Hence, if God, by neglecting to execute his law, should destroy its authority, it is manifest that he would treat it with the greatest injustice. If,

when mankind sinned, God had proceeded to execute on them the penalty of his law, he would, in this way, have completely supported its authority; and, in this respect, have done it justice. But, without executing the penalty, he could not be just to his law, unless something could be done, which, as a substitute, would as fully support its authority. Any thing which would do this, would be, in this respect, a satisfactory atonement. On the ground of such an atonement, God might appear just to his law in pardoning transgressors; because pardoning them, in this way, would not injure its authority. But if God had pardoned sinners without such an atonement, he must, of necessity, have destroyed the life and authority of an infinitely good law; and this must have been infinite injustice. Atonement was necessary, therefore, that sinners might be pardoned, consistently with doing justice to the law.

2. If God had pardoned sinners without an atonement, he must have been unjust to his kingdom.

That a king may be just to his kingdom, he must adopt all proper means to promote its best interest. That this may be attained, one thing, which is essentially necessary, is, that peace and harmony may be secured as far as possible. But that peace and harmony may be secured among moral beings, they must be placed under the authority of good and wholesome laws, which are calculated to discountenance vice, and encourage virtue. There is no other way in which moral beings can be properly governed. If, then, a king desires to promote the interest and happiness of his kingdom, this desire will lead him to enact good laws for its government; laws which have a tendency to restrain and suppress the various kinds of wickedness which disturb the peace of society. But every good law must be enforced with some suitable penalty. Should a law be enacted without any penalty, however suitable and important its provisions, it must be destitute of all authority. It would be of the nature of advice, rather than of law. For it could have no more power or tendency than mere advice, to restrain from immorality. But if it be necessary that vice should be suppressed or restrained, that the best interest of a kingdom may be secured, it must be equally necessary that efficient laws should be made against it; and, that laws may be of this character, they must be enforced with proper penalties.

Every king, therefore, is under obligation to his kingdom, to enact laws, enforced with suitable penalties, against the practice of vice. If he do

otherwise, he must conduct towards his kingdom with the greatest injustice. Because, in no other way can he possibly secure the great object of government.

But if the well being of a kingdom require that laws be enacted against vice, and enforced with penalties, it must equally require that these laws be faithfully executed. However good laws may be in themselves, if they are not carried into execution, they lose their force and energy, and utterly fail of securing the ends for which they were designed. A good king, therefore, having made laws for the benefit of his kingdom, will be very careful to have them executed. Should any king do otherwise he would not promote the best interest of his kingdom. Instead of restraining, he would encourage wickedness. His subjects, perceiving that he disregarded and slighted his own laws, would be encouraged to disregard and slight them likewise. Seeing the laws were not executed, they would not fear the penalty. They would be under no more restraint than if no laws existed. The kingdom would be filled with vice and confusion, and would soon come to an end. Whenever any government ceases to execute the penalty of a law, that law is virtually repealed, because it ceases to produce any effect, and becomes a nullity. Some governments seldom repeal laws in any other way. Whenever any law is judged to be improper, or no longer necessary, instead of being formally repealed, the execution of it is discontinued. The penalty is no longer inflicted. This is designed to answer, and does really answer, the purpose of a repeal. It is necessary, therefore, in order that any king may be just to his kingdom, that he should not only enact good laws, enforced with proper penalties, but that he should cause these laws to be faithfully executed.

All this is as necessary in the divine government, as in human governments, and indeed as much more necessary, as the former is more important than the latter. It is, in the nature of things, impossible, that God should govern moral beings, as moral beings, in any other way than by laws. It is not intended, that God has not power enough to govern them by impulse, as he governs the material world; for he unquestionably has. This, however, would not be to govern them as moral beings, but as material objects. God may as well govern material objects, as such, by the influence of motives, as he can govern moral beings, as such, without the authority of laws. When God gave existence to intelligent beings, he

was under the necessity either of leaving them to themselves, without retaining any government over them, or of placing them under the authority of a moral law. For, since it is absurd to suppose a race of moral beings governed as such, without moral laws, it follows, that God must govern moral beings by laws, or else exercise no government over them. But it must be obvious, that it is utterly irreconcilable with wisdom and goodness, to create intelligent beings, and then leave them without government. It clearly results, therefore, that God was under a moral necessity of placing moral beings under moral laws. It must be evident, moreover, that a penalty was no less necessary to give efficacy to the law of God than it is to any other law. Hence it follows, that when God placed intelligent beings under a moral law, he was under a moral necessity of enforcing that law with a proper penalty. He is, also, under the same necessity of executing the law, by inflicting the penalty on every transgressor; unless something can be devised, which will, as a substitute, equally secure the life and energy of the law.

From what has already been said, it is evident that the law of God was necessary to secure the best interest of his kingdom, by discountenancing disobedience or wickedness. Justice to his kingdom required that such a law should be given to his moral subjects; because its best interests could not be secured in any other way. But no law can have any influence to deter moral beings from vice, unless enforced by a proper penalty; nor can it continue to have influence, unless the penalty is executed when the law is violated. Hence if when God gave a law to the subjects of his kingdom, prohibiting wickedness, he had suffered it to be transgressed with impunity, the law would have had no tendency to restrain them. Every law must be enforced, or its authority must cease. If, when mankind transgressed the divine law, they had been suffered to escape with impunity, it must entirely have destroyed the authority and force of the law. Moral beings would have perceived that it was not the determination of God to execute the penalty of his law. When they had learned this, all the restraints which the law had imposed on them would be immediately removed. But if, instead of this, moral beings perceive that God is determined to support his law by executing its penalty they will be under a powerful restraint, because they will be afraid to transgress, lest the penalty should be inflicted on them. In no other way is it possible that the law should impose any restraint, which might not have been equally imposed by mere advice.

If, when man transgressed, God had executed the penalty on him, this would have afforded evidence to all moral beings that he was determined to execute the penalty of his law on transgressors. This would have had a powerful tendency to restrain them from disobedience. They would have been afraid to transgress. Had God done this, therefore, he would have done something which would tend to deter others from transgression, and to secure peace and order in his kingdom. In this way he would have been just to his kingdom. But if when man became a sinner by transgressing the divine law, God had pardoned him without any atonement, this would have been evidence to intelligent beings that he was not determined to execute the penalty of his law. They would, of course, have ceased to be afraid of the penalty, and the law would no longer have imposed any restraint upon them. If, then, God had pardoned sinners without an atonement, he would not have done any thing to deter others from disobedience. Instead of preventing, he would have encouraged wickedness. For when moral beings perceived that God did not respect his own law, they would have been encouraged to treat it with disrespect. When they perceived that God did not honor it, by supporting its authority, they would have been encouraged to dishonor it, by disobeying its precepts. In this way, instead of deterring moral beings from disobedience, God would have encourage them in it. This, instead of promoting and securing, would have destroyed the best interests of his subjects. Hence if God had pardoned sinners without an atonement, he must have been infinitely unjust to his kingdom. If, however, any thing by way of atonement could be done which would tend to deter others from disobedience, as effectually as would the execution of the penalty of the law on transgressors, God might, out of respect to this, pardon transgressors and be just to his kingdom still. But any atonement which would not be as effectual in deterring others from disobedience, as the execution of the penalty of the law would be, must be insufficient; because this would not secure the good of the kingdom so effectually. The execution of the penalty of the law on those subjects who had transgressed, would have deterred other moral subjects, from transgression, and in this way have done justice to the kingdom; but justice could not be done by any thing short of this, unless it were something which, as a substitute, would as fully answer the same purpose; that is, be equally effectual in deterring others from disobedience. It was necessary, therefore, that there should be an atonement in order that God "might be just, and the justifier of" those who

had transgressed his law.

3. If God had pardoned sinners without any atonement, he would have been unjust to himself.

Every good being, in order to do justice to his own character, must manifest his goodness. A wise being, in order to do justice to his character, must manifest his wisdom; or, at least, he must not manifest any thing which is opposite to wisdom. All must allow that if one being should knowingly give a wrong representation of the character of another, who is wise and good, he would be very unjust. But if a good and wise being should give a wrong representation of his own character (if this were possible) there would be, the same injustice done, which there would if the same representation were made by another. The injury done to the good character would be the same in the one case as in the other. Hence it must be evident that if God is good, if he is wise, and if he is consistent in his conduct, he must manifest his goodness and his wisdom, or be very unjust to his own character. But if God had pardoned sinners without any atonement, he could not have manifested either his goodness, wisdom, or consistency of conduct. This may clearly appear from the following considerations.

First. In this way, he could not have manifested any regard for holiness, or any hatred of sin.

By God's pardoning a sinner is meant his receiving him to favor, and treating him as if he had never sinned. If, therefore, he had pardoned sinners without any atonement, it must have been impossible, in the nature of things, for him to have given intelligent beings any reason to believe that he is more opposed to sin than to holiness. For, in this case, he would have treated sinners in the same manner that he treats holy beings. He would have put no difference between the holy and the profane. He would have manifested no more disapprobation of the disobedient than of the obedient; nor any more complacency in the obedient than in the disobedient. It is plain, therefore, that in this way he could not have manifested any regard for holiness nor hatred of sin. Hence he would have done infinite injustice to his own character. He never could have appeared an object of holy love and reverence. Holy beings never could have felt safe in his hands. They must have lost that confidence and delight in his character, which resulted from

contemplating him as a being who loved righteousness and hated iniquity.

It is vain to object to this, that God might have manifested his hatred of sin by a public declaration of it, even though he had pardoned sinners. There is no more sure method of determining what any being is, than by ascertaining what he does. The declarations of no being can command rational belief, while these declarations are manifestly contradicted by his actions. If an earthly sovereign should treat his obedient and disobedient subjects precisely in the same manner, they would both conclude, that disobedience is just as pleasing to him as obedience. If a parent should neglect to punish his disobedient child, and to reward the obedient, they would justly come to the same conclusion. No professions of the sovereign or of the parent to the contrary would command rational belief, because their actions would contradict them. The case would be precisely the same with respect to the Supreme Being, if he should profess a regard to holiness and a hatred of sin, and not act accordingly.

If, when mankind sinned, God had executed the penalty of his law upon them, this would have manifested his hatred of sin. By this, therefore, he would have appeared just to his own character. But in no other way could he be just to himself, unless it were by something, which, as a substitute for the execution of the penalty of the law, would make an equally bright display of his hatred of sin. If any thing of this kind could be done, which would manifest the divine hatred of sin as fully as would the just punishment of it, this would be a satisfactory atonement. Out of respect to such an atonement, God might pardon sinners, and still be just to his own character. His pardoning sinners on account of such an atonement, would not lead holy beings to distrust the integrity of his character. But if God should pardon sinners without such an atonement, his character must appear at least doubtful, if not decidedly bad. Holy beings, perceiving that he treated the holy and wicked alike, would be utterly unable to determine, from his conduct towards them, which acted most agreeably to his mind. In this situation, being unable to learn his character, they could not feel safe. His treating the unholy as holy beings ought to be treated would, at least, lead them to suspect, that he might treat his holy subjects as unholy ones deserve to be treated. And thus, in their perplexity, they might fear him, but they could never love or trust him. But if they perceived that he would never pardon sinners without an

atonement, this would show them his regard for holiness and his hatred of sin, and would secure their confidence and inspire their love. Thus it appears that an atonement was necessary to the pardon of sinners, in order that God might manifest his hatred of sin, and thus be just to himself.

Secondly. If God had pardoned sinners without an atonement, he could not have manifested any wisdom in giving the law, but would have been chargeable with the greatest inconsistency of conduct.

It is evidently impossible for God to manifest any wisdom in giving a law which could answer no valuable purpose. But, certainly, if he had entirely neglected to execute the law which he has given, this law must have been utterly useless. Nor would he have appeared merely destitute of wisdom; but his conduct would have involved glaring inconsistency. This inconsistency might have been thus stated: God has given a law to his creatures, which he refuses, or, at least, entirely neglects to support. This law is either good, or not good. If it is not good, why did he give it? If it is good, why does he not execute it? In either case, he must be chargeable with imperfection. If God has given a law to his creatures which is not good, it must be because he either could not devise, or did not choose, a good one. In the one case, he must be deficient in wisdom; in the other, he must be destitute of goodness. But if the law be good, and God does not support it, this must be either because he is not able, or because he does not choose, to support it. Here, therefore, must be, either a deficiency of power, or, as before, a destitution of goodness. In either case, the divine character is ruined. But if God had pardoned sinners, without any atonement, all this must have followed. It must have been forever true, that God had given a law, and refused or neglected to support it; that he had denounced evil against transgressors, and never fulfilled his threatening. In this case, his character could never have been cleared of the most glaring inconsistency, and imperfection.

Nothing can be plainer than this, if God does not execute what he has threatened, he must appear inconsistent, if not destitute of virtue. If it was necessary, when God gave his law, that he should enforce it with an awful penalty, or accompany it with the threatening, "In the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die," it must, for the same reason, be necessary, that this threatening should be executed. If the execution of this threatening would be hard, unmerciful, or unnecessary, then the

threatening itself must have been highly unreasonable. If it would be wrong in God to execute what he has threatened, it must follow, that he has threatened to do wrong. But if it would not be wrong in God to execute his threatening, then, certainly, it must be wrong not to execute it; for if he should not execute his threatening, it would be in reality an acknowledgment that his threatening was unreasonable and unnecessary, and that, on this account, it ought not to be executed. It would appear, on the part of God, like repentance; as if he now regretted that he had annexed any such threatening to his law, and resolved that he would be more reasonable than to carry it into execution. It is necessary, therefore, that God should execute what he has threatened, unless something be done by way of atonement, which, as a substitute, will fully answer the same purpose, in order that his own character may remain unsullied, and he appear glorious in holiness.

If, when mankind sinned, God had executed the penalty of the law upon them, his conduct would then have appeared consistent. He would have appeared just to himself. Hence, in order that he might pardon sinners, and still appear consistent, it was necessary that something should be done, by way of atonement, which would answer every purpose, which the execution of the penalty of the law would have answered.

When all these purposes were answered, by art atonement, as fully as they could have been by the execution of the law, then God might pardon sinners, and be consistent, and just to his own character. But any thing, which would have failed of answering all these purposes, could not have been a sufficient atonement. This must be evident from the consideration, that nothing short of the execution of the whole penalty could answer the ends of the law.

Some have supposed that though an atonement was necessary, in order that sinners might be pardoned, yet it was not necessary that the atonement should be sufficient to answer all the purposes which the execution of the penalty of the law would have answered. But this cannot be true, unless it is also true that if there had been no atonement, it would not have been necessary to execute the whole penalty of the law on transgressors. But the same reasoning which shows that it was necessary that any part of the penalty should be executed, also shows that it was equally necessary that the whole should be executed. For if it is not necessary that God should execute all that he has threatened, it

must follow that he has-threatened too much, and, consequently, that his threatenings are unreasonable and improper. If God's threatenings are too severe, if they are unreasonable, then it was unreasonable for God to make them. And it is readily granted, that if divine threatenings are unreasonable, if the penalty of the law is too great, then it is not necessary that it should be fully executed. But if the penalty be not unreasonable, if it be not too great, then it is necessary, that the whole should be executed. Because if it should appear that God had given a law, and annexed a penalty which is hard and unreasonable, it must be impossible ever to clear the divine character of imperfection. But if God had neither executed the whole penalty of the law, nor done any thing by way of atonement which would fully answer the same purposes, his conduct must have implied an acknowledgment that the penalty of his law was unreasonably severe, and ought not to be fully executed. There was, therefore, the same necessity that God should execute the penalty of his law fully, in order to preserve his character, that there was that he should execute it in part. No objection can be urged against one, which will not lie against the other with equal force. If God has made threatenings which are unreasonable, in any respect, it as really proves him imperfect, as though they were unreasonable in every respect. But if God should not execute his threatenings in every respect, it would be an acknowledgment that they are, in some respect, unreasonable. It was necessary, therefore, that God, if he would do justice to his own character, should execute, literally, all his threatenings, unless something could be done by way of atonement which, as a substitute, would fully answer all the same purposes. Hence it is evident that an atonement was necessary, in order that sinners might be pardoned.

This exactly agrees with the view which the apostle has given of the subject in the third chapter of his Epistle to the Romans. Having freely remarked on the universal and total depravity of mankind, and shown the impossibility of their being justified by the law, he introduces the method of justification revealed in the gospel. "But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; even the righteousness of God, which is by faith in Jesus Christ, unto all, and upon all them that believe. Being justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus; whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins. To declare, I say, at this time, his

righteousness, that he might be just, and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus." Here the apostle decides the point respecting the necessity and design of atonement; that it was to manifest the rectitude of the divine character; that God might be just in the justification of sinners.

CHAPTER III: WHETHER THE SUFFERINGS OF CHRIST WERE SUFFICIENT TO REMOVE THE OBSTACLES WHICH STOOD IN THE WAY OF THE PARDON OF SINNERS.

BEFORE the subject of this chapter is introduced, it may not be amiss to call the attention of the reader to a brief review of the preceding one. For, unless the obstacles, which stood in the way of God's pardoning sinners, be distinctly in view, we certainly cannot be well prepared to understand what Christ has done to remove them. Let it be carefully remembered, then, that the atonement was not necessary to soften the feelings of God, and render him kind and compassionate. The divine feelings towards sinners, considered as objects of benevolence and compassion, are not in the least degree altered. God felt the same tenderness and compassion towards them before atonement was made, which he now feels; and if atonement had been impossible, or ineligible, in the view of infinite wisdom, still the divine benevolence and compassion towards them would have been for ever the same. If there had been no atonement, it is indeed true, God could never have pardoned them, but the reason would not have been found in the want of benevolence, or compassion. He would have been prevented by difficulties of quite a different nature. So that, although he would have been, in this case, for ever inflexible, yet he would never have been unmerciful, or destitute of compassion. The insuperable difficulties which stood in the way of God's pardoning sinners without an atonement, have been brought into view. It has been shown, that, if God had pardoned sinners without any, atonement, he must have been altogether-unjust in several things, which are of infinite importance to the system of moral beings.

1. He would have been unjust to his holy law, as he could neither have shown it the respect which it deserves, nor supported its authority. This, however, as a righteous lawgiver, he was under obligation to do.
2. He would have been unjust to his kingdom. He would have done nothing to deter others from disobedience, and thus to secure that order and harmony among his subjects, which the good of his kingdom justly demanded.

3. He would have been unjust to himself. He would not have manifested his regard for holiness, and his hatred of sin; nor any wisdom, or consistency of conduct, in giving the law. In this way he would have ruined his most excellent and glorious character.

These difficulties were an insuperable barrier against the pardon of sinners, without an atonement. To remove these difficulties, the atonement was necessary. That God might be just, in these respects, while he pardoned sinners, was the object of the atonement. And in order that this object might be accomplished, it was necessary that the atonement should answer all the purposes which the complete execution of the penalty of the law would have answered. Otherwise, it would be insufficient. It was necessary that it should manifest as high respect for the law, and do as much for the support of its authority, as the complete execution of its penalty would have done. Otherwise, God could not be just to his law in pardoning sinners. It was necessary that it should be calculated as effectually to deter others from disobedience, as the full execution of the penalty of the law would have been. Otherwise, in pardoning sinners, God could not be just to his kingdom. It was also necessary, that it should manifest God's regard for holiness, and hatred of sin, as clearly as the full execution of the penalty of the law would have done. Otherwise, in granting pardon, he could not be just, to his own character. In short, that his righteousness might be declared, and he be just, and the justifier of any sinner, it was necessary that the atonement should fully and completely answer all the purposes which the full and complete execution of the penalty of the law would have answered.

The way is now prepared to inquire, more directly, in what the atonement of Christ consists; or, in other words, what Christ has done to remove those obstacles which stood in the way of the pardon of sinners. To ascertain this, only two inquiries will be necessary; one, concerning what Christ has done by the way of suffering; and the other, concerning what he has done in the way of active obedience. These two inquiries may determine the point; because these things comprise all that Christ ever did in our world.

Some suppose that the atonement of Christ consists in what he did by way of suffering. Others suppose it consists in his active obedience. And others, that it consists in both. One or other of these opinions must be according to truth; for nothing but what consists in sufferings, or

inobedience, has ever been done by Christ which has any relation to the subject. In order to ascertain, with certainty, in which of these opinions the truth lies; that is, whether the atonement of Christ consists in his sufferings alone, or in his obedience alone, or in both united; it will be necessary to compare his sufferings, and his obedience, severally, with the necessity of atonement. If, on examination, it should appear that the sufferings of Christ fully meet all the necessities of atonement; that is, answer all the purposes which the execution of the penalty of the law would have answered, and that the obedience of Christ does not answer these purposes; it will follow, as an undeniable consequence, that the atonement consists in suffering. If, on the other hand, it should appear upon examination that the obedience of Christ fully meets all the necessities of atonement, or answers all the purposes which the execution of the penalty of the law would have answered, and that the sufferings of Christ do not, then it will follow, by unavoidable consequence, that the atonement consists in obedience. But if it should appear that neither the obedience nor the sufferings of Christ alone are capable of meeting all the necessities of atonement, but that, united, they fully accomplish this end, then the conclusion must be, that Christ's atonement does not consist wholly in sufferings, nor wholly in obedience, but partly, in each, or in both united.

Our first inquiry will be concerning what Christ did by way of suffering. That Christ did suffer, is a truth clearly established in the holy Scriptures. He was a "Lamb slain from the foundation of the world."

Rev.13:8. "In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins according to the riches of his grace." Eph. 1:7. "By his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us." Heb. 9:12. "Who, his own self, bare our sins in his own body on the tree:" 1 Pet. 2:24. "He hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows. He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities, the chastisement of our peace was upon him, and with his stripes we are healed." Isa. 53:3, 5. "He is our passover, sacrificed for us." 1 Cor. 5:7. "Now, once, in the end of the world, hath he appeared to put away sin by, the sacrifice of himself." Heb. 9: 26. "O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory?" Luke 24:25. "Thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead on the third

day." Luke 24:46. The Scriptures abound with similar declarations. Let us, then, inquire whether the sufferings of Christ meet all the necessities of atonement. Are they sufficient to answer all the purposes which would have been answered by the execution of the penalty of the law?

1. Do the sufferings of Christ make it manifest that God respects his holy law? Do they manifest as much respect for the law, as the execution of its penalty would have done; so that God, in pardoning sinners out of respect to Christ's sufferings, can be just to his law?

That a satisfactory answer may be given to these inquiries, it is necessary that we be able to state clearly how God would have manifested respect for his law, if he had literally executed its penalty; or in what that manifestation of respect would have consisted. If we can state clearly and definitely how the execution of the penalty upon sinners would have manifested God's respect for his law, then we shall be prepared to ascertain with equal clearness whether the sufferings of Christ manifested the same respect.

The execution of the penalty would not have manifested God's respect for the law, unless it had, in his view, involved in it an evil, in itself considered. The manifestation of respect would not have consisted in simply satisfying the literal demands of the law; but, rather, in submitting to an evil, for the sake, of those demands. By God's submitting to an evil is meant, his consenting that a thing should take place, which must be, in its own nature, disagreeable to his benevolent heart, if viewed independently of all other things. The misery of mankind, which would have been the effect of the execution of the law, would have been such an evil. If, when mankind sinned, God had been entirely destitute of benevolent and compassionate feelings towards them, so that their misery would not have been an evil in his view, he would not, in this case, have manifested respect for his law, by executing its penalty upon them. But if he felt really benevolent and compassionate towards them, so that their misery appeared, in his view, to be a great evil; and if, with such feelings respecting their misery, he had proceeded to execute the penalty on them, he would have shown great respect for his law. Suppose that, when mankind sinned, it had been evident to all intelligent creatures that God felt indifferently towards them, whether they should be happy or miserable; that their happiness and misery, considered in themselves, were equally desirable, so that, independently of the demands of his law,

and all consequences to the universe, he was no more inclined to make them happy than to make them miserable; is it conceivable that, in this case, his executing the penalty annexed to transgression, would have manifested any respect for his law? But, on the other hand, suppose it was evident that his feelings towards them were benevolent, and he was disposed to do them good if it could be done with propriety; that he was possessed of kindness and compassion towards them, so that their misery must be, in his view, a great evil considered in itself; and that, notwithstanding these feelings, he had made them miserable because his law demanded it, is it not evident that he would have manifested great respect for his law? If, then, God had executed the penalty of his law, it is obvious his manifestation of respect to it would have consisted in his submitting to an evil on account of it.

This, may be illustrated by an easy comparison. Suppose a king should enact a law against some particular kind of wickedness, and should threaten every transgressor with death. Suppose, further, that the first transgressor is one of his favorite generals; one whom the king loves, as is evident to all his subjects, with a peculiarly tender affection. Now let the king proceed to execute the threatening, and take the life of the transgressor, and it is plain, that he would manifest great respect for his law. None would doubt, in this case, whether he were disposed to treat his law with respect. They would see the highest proof of it. This evidence, too, would result from his having submitted to a great evil, rather than not execute his law. And, as his manifestation of respect for his law would consist in his willingness to submit to an evil rather than that the law should not be executed, it must be obvious, that the greater the evil is to which he would submit rather than not execute the law, the greater would be the manifestation of respect for his law. But if the first transgressor, instead of being a great favorite, should be one whom the king is known to hate; one against whom it is evident he wishes to find some occasion to take his life; and should he, under these circumstances, proceed against the offender and cause the law to be executed, this surely would be no manifestation of respect for the law.

However much the king might really respect his law, yet, since it is well known that he wished for some occasion to take the life of the hated person, he would not, by actually taking it, discover any respect for his law; because, in this case, he would have conducted towards the

transgressor in precisely the same manner, if, in truth, he had been entirely regardless of his law. Though he executes his law, he does not, for the sake of executing it, submit to any evil. For the same reason, if, when mankind transgressed, God had not viewed their misery as an evil, he could not have manifested respect for his law, by executing upon them its penalty.

From the foregoing reasoning it must clearly follow, that whatever evil God has submitted to on account of his law, must manifest his respect for it. If, then, the sufferings of Christ were really an evil in the sight of God, and he submitted to them on account of his law, it must be evident that they are sufficient to show his respect for his law. It cannot admit of a rational doubt, that the sufferings of Christ were a great evil in the sight of God. His sufferings were of the most ignominious and painful nature. Considered in themselves, his sufferings must have been an evil of very great magnitude. And as Christ was the only begotten and well-beloved Son of God, these sufferings must have been an evil, in his view, peculiarly great. Hence, for God to submit to such an evil, on account of his law, must be a manifestation of respect to it exceedingly great. Thus we see that the sufferings of Christ are sufficient to manifest God's respect for his law.

But it may still be asked, whether it appears that the sufferings of Christ manifested, on the part of God, as much respect for the law, as the execution of the penalty would have done? Are the sufferings of Christ as great an evil, in themselves considered, as the misery of all mankind would have been?

To this it may be replied, that it is not necessary. It is not necessary that the sufferings of Christ should be, in themselves considered, so great an evil in the view of God, as the misery of all mankind would have been. It is sufficient if God shows as much respect to his law, by the sufferings of Christ, as he would have done by the execution of the penalty on mankind. To this end, all that-could be necessary was, that the sufferings of Christ should be, evidently, as great an evil in the view of God, as the misery of mankind could have been manifested to be, in case the penalty of the law had been executed upon them. If the penalty had been executed upon them, it never could have been known, how great an evil their misery was in his view; because, in that case, it never could have been known how much he loved them. It is plain that their misery, which

would have resulted from the execution of the law, would have been an evil, in his view, great in proportion to the strength of his benevolence. Of course this evil must appear to other beings great, in proportion to their apprehension of the strength of his benevolence. But the strength of God's benevolence towards sinners never could have been manifested to the degree in which it now appears, if the penalty of the law had been executed. For it is only in the sufferings of Christ for sinners that divine love appears in its glorious fulness. It was in Christ's dying "for us, while we were yet sinners," that God commended "his love towards us." Rom. 5:8. "In this was manifested the love of God towards us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him." 1 John 4:9. Other beings, therefore, would never have known how "God loved the world," if he had not given his only begotten Son to die on the cross for sinners.

It hence follows, that if the penalty of the law had been executed, God would not have manifested that the misery of mankind was an evil, in his view, in any measure so great, as it now appears to be in view of what Christ has suffered. And yet, executing the penalty would have been all that the law required. By doing it, God would have submitted to an evil sufficiently great, in the apprehension of other intelligent beings, to have manifested all that respect for the law which the circumstances of the case required.

It is not necessary, therefore, that the sufferings of Christ should appear to be so great an evil, in his view, as he has now manifested the misery of mankind to be; but only as great as he would have manifested it to be if Christ had not suffered. If this is done, God will manifest as much respect for his law, by the sufferings of Christ, as he could have done by the execution of the penalty on sinners, although the real evil, in the former case, is less than in the latter. That the sufferings of Christ are as great an evil, in the view of God, as he could have manifested the misery of mankind to be if Christ had not suffered, must be evident to every one who considers that his sufferings were the painful and shameful sufferings of the well beloved of the Father.

Thus we see that the sufferings of Christ may be sufficient to manifest, on the part of God, as much respect to his law as the full execution of the penalty would have done. In view of Christ's sufferings, therefore, God may be just to his law, and the justifier of him who believeth in Jesus.

Thus far the sufferings of Christ most amply meet the necessity of atonement.

2. Does it appear that God could be just to his kingdom in pardoning sinners out of respect to the sufferings of Christ? Will the sufferings of Christ be as effectual in deterring the subjects of divine government from disobedience, as the execution of the penalty of the law would have been?

A satisfactory answer to this inquiry, may be easily given. It cannot be difficult to show why the execution of the penalty of the law would have had a tendency to restrain and deter others from disobedience. This being done, it will be easy to show that for precisely the same reason the sufferings of Christ are sufficient to secure the same end.

If God had executed His law on mankind when they sinned, other moral beings would have seen that he was determined to support his law. The execution of the penalty would have appeared to them a great evil; and it would have appeared to be their unavoidable portion, should they follow the example of guilty man. Hence they would be afraid to sin. But certainly the sufferings of Christ must be calculated to produce the same effects in their minds. When they saw that Christ must undergo such dreadful sufferings that rebel man might be pardoned, they would clearly see that God was determined to support his law. Considering the infinite dignity and excellency of Christ's person, his sufferings would appear to them an infinite evil. Hence they would fear that the evil threatened in the law would unavoidably fall on themselves, should they dare to transgress; and especially after such a solemn warning. When the Jews were leading our Saviour to Mount Calvary, to crucify him, he said, "If they do these things in the green tree, what shall be done in the dry?" If Christ, a perfectly innocent and holy being, when acting the part of a Mediator between God and sinners must endure such dreadful sufferings, what may incorrigible offenders expect? The reflection is certainly natural. Since God would not show favor to sinners unless his beloved Son, who was infinitely holy, would die for them, those who continue in their sins cannot rationally hope to escape condign punishment. The sufferings of Christ, therefore, must have the same effect in deterring others from disobedience, which the full execution of the penalty of the law would have had.

Should it be asked how the sufferings of Christ can be as effectual in deterring others from sin as the execution of the law would have been, since the execution of the law would have been really the greatest evil, the answer, which has already been given to a similar question, must be virtually repeated. If the foregoing reasoning is correct, the execution of the law would have tended to deter other beings from transgression, because it would have shown them God's determination to maintain good government, notwithstanding the dreadful evils in which it might involve the guilty.

The more exalted their apprehensions might be of his benevolence, the more effectually would the execution of his law convince them of his inflexible determination to restrain wickedness. Because the more benevolent he might be, the greater would be his unwillingness to make his creatures miserable. His benevolence would render their misery, in his view, a great evil. It would be such an evil as his benevolence would never consent should take place, unless, in his apprehension, the circumstances of the case rendered it indispensably necessary. In the execution of the law he would submit to a great evil for the sake of deterring others from transgression. And the greater that evil might be the more irresistible would be the evidence which would result from it, that the guilty must suffer. Intelligent beings then, would feel the force of this restraint (not necessarily, according to the real greatness of the evil to which God would submit, but) exactly in proportion to their apprehension of the greatness of it. All that is necessary, then, in order that the sufferings of Christ may be as effectual in deterring others from transgression as the execution of the law would have been, is, that his sufferings should be evidently as great an evil, in the view of God, as the misery of mankind could have been manifested to be, in case the penalty of the law had been executed. If the penalty had been executed, however, it never could have been known how great an evil their misery was, in his view, because in that case it could not have been known how much he loved them. It is not necessary, therefore, that the sufferings of Christ should appear to be so great an evil in the view of God, as he has now manifested the misery of mankind to be; but only as great as he would have manifested it to be, if Christ had not suffered. If this is done, other intelligent beings will be as effectually deterred from transgressing the law, by the sufferings of Christ as an atonement, as they could have been by the execution of the penalty on sinners, although the real evil in

the former case is less than in the latter. In view of the sufferings of Christ, therefore, God may be just to his kingdom, and "the justifier of" sinners who believe in Jesus. In this respect, also, the sufferings of Christ amply meet all the necessities of atonement. But,

3. Do the sufferings of Christ manifest God's regard for holiness, and hatred of sin, so that, out of respect to these sufferings, he can be just to himself in pardoning sinners?

Most certainly. If it be asked how, the answer is, In the same way that the execution of the law would have done it. If Christ, the beloved of the Father, must shed his blood in order that sin may be pardoned, it proves that God is irreconcilably opposed to it, as clearly and as fully as this could have been done by the execution of the penalty of the law on mankind. If the misery of mankind which the execution of the penalty of the law must have occasioned, being a great evil, was capable of manifesting God's abhorrence of sin; then, for the same reason, the sufferings of Christ must be capable of manifesting his abhorrence of sin; for these are, also, a great evil.

It is most evident, from Scripture, that our Lord's sufferings and death were indications of divine displeasure against sinners. The Scriptures abundantly teach that it was God who brought the sufferings of Christ upon him. He was the great agent, and wicked men and devils were only instruments in his hand. The Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all. It pleased the Lord to bruise him; he hath put him to grief." Isa. 53:6, 10. Natural evil is that which God uses to show his displeasure against his disobedient creatures. Now, if God was not displeased, why did he bring the most exquisite sufferings upon his beloved Son? Nothing can be more certain, however, than that God was not displeased with Christ himself, when these sufferings were inflicted. Never was the Son more an object of the Father's complacency, than at the very moment when he was expiring, in excruciating anguish, upon the cross. Hence, the Scriptures teach us, that on account of these very sufferings, he is raised to distinguished glory. Because "he humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross, therefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." Phil. 2:8-11. But if God was

not displeased with his beloved Son, then, unquestionably, he was displeased with sinners, for whose transgressions Christ "was wounded;" for whose "iniquities" he "was bruised." For that he was really displeased is certain. Accordingly, in the sufferings he inflicted upon our blessed Saviour, he is represented as making use of such instruments as express anger, as a "rod," and a "sword;" "Awake, O sword, smite the shepherd." Zech 13:7. Here God is figuratively represented as striking and smiting his Son with a rod, and a sword, as a man smites his enemy. The circumstances attending his death, also, indicate the divine displeasure. He was left of God to the rage of his enemies; to their bitter reproaches, and cruel insults. He was even denied the common civilities paid to the worst criminals. When in the most excruciating pain on the cross, and surrounded by insulting foes, he exclaimed, in the agony of his soul, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?"

Since it cannot be admitted that these memorable words of our expiring Lord expressed any sense of divine displeasure against himself, they must necessarily be understood, as importing the overwhelming sense which he had of God's anger against sinners, on whose account he was then delivered up to death. It is certain that the Father did, in some sense, forsake the Son, when in the most critical and awful situation imaginable, when expiring in the utmost agony for a sinful world; for this Christ asserts. It is certain, too, that this was something which he considered a dreadful evil. But if God were not displeased, why did he give up the beloved Son to such a cruel death? Why did, he, in any sense, forsake him in this critical and awful moment? Let any one candidly consider, that all the evils which Christ endured, were brought on him by the Father; that God is represented as the prime agent in the surprising work; as using hostile weapons; as chastising and correcting, with a rod and a sword; let him behold the tremendous scene on Mount Calvary, and hear the groans of our expiring Lord; and let him recollect that he thus suffered and died for sinners; and, surely, he cannot fail of seeing a most striking manifestation of God's opposition to sin. He must perceive as much opposition to sin manifested on the of God, as the misery of mankind could ever have manifested.

Here, again, it can be no valid objection that the misery of mankind which the execution of the law must have involved, would really have been, in itself, the greatest evil; because, as already shown, it never could have

been manifested that it was the greatest evil, in the view of God, if Christ had not suffered. Still, therefore, the sufferings of Christ must be capable of manifesting as much opposition to sin, on the part of God, as the sufferings of mankind could ever have manifested. But if God is opposed to sin, he must regard holiness. The sufferings of Christ, in this way, fully manifest the wisdom and consistency of divine conduct in giving the law. In view of Christ's sufferings, therefore, God may be just to himself, and yet be "the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus."

Thus it appears that the sufferings of Christ most fully meet all the necessities of atonement; that is, answer the same valuable purposes which the execution of the penalty of the law would have answered.

Various similitudes have been used by writers on this subject for the purpose of illustration. But, perhaps, no one is more pertinent, or has been oftener repeated, than the story of the atonement which Zaleucus made for his son. Zaleucus enacted a law against adultery. To give it authority, that it might answer the end for which it was enacted, he enforced it with a penalty. He threatened the transgressor with the loss of both his eyes. His own son transgressed. Zaleucus loved his son, felt compassionate towards him, and desired to pardon him, provided certain difficulties, which stood in the way, could be removed. These obstacles were similar to those which, as we have seen, stood in the way of God's pardoning sinners.

1. Zaleucus perceived that if he should pardon his son without doing any thing to answer the demands of the law, he would treat his law as if it were not good, and would not show it that respect which it deserved. In order, therefore, to be just to his law, he found he must put out the eyes of his son, unless something else could be done, which, as a substitute, would show equal respect for his law, and equally tend to support its authority.

2. Zaleucus perceived that if adultery was not checked, it would greatly disturb the peace and mar the happiness of his kingdom. He also knew that nothing was so well calculated to restrain his subjects from this crime, as the prompt execution of cogent laws. And he knew, moreover, that if he should pardon his son without any thing to express his abhorrence of his son's crime, this would have no tendency to deter others from the like offence but would rather greatly encourage them in it.

Thus he perceived that the peace and happiness, if not even the very existence of his kingdom, depended much on the execution of his law; so that if he would be just to his kingdom, and do what was incumbent on him to promote its happiness, he must proceed against his son and execute the penalty of his law upon him, unless something could be done, which, as a substitute, would be equally effectual in deterring others from the like disobedience.

3. Another difficulty stood in the way of pardon. Zaleucus was really opposed to adultery, as his law declared him to be. He knew, therefore, that he could not be just to his own character, unless he manifested his hatred of this crime. If he proceeded against his son in the execution of the law, and put out his eyes, this would manifest this hatred. But if he granted a pardon without showing his hatred of adultery in some other way, it could not appear that he did hate it. Hence he found it was absolutely necessary, in order to do justice to his own character, that the penalty of the law should be executed upon his son, unless something could be done which, as a substitute, would equally manifest his hatred of his son's crime.

Zaleucus, it appears, was determined to show respect for his law; to do what he could to deter others from disobedience; and to show to his subjects his hatred of adultery, even at the expense of his son's eyes, unless it could be done as fully some other way. But if all this could be as completely effected in any other way, he was anxious to spare his son. That he might secure all these ends and be just to his law, to his kingdom, and to himself, and at the same time spare his son from total blindness, Zaleucus caused one of his own eyes to be put out, and one of his son's. But how does it appear that this would answer the purposes designed? Particularly,

1. How could Zaleucus in this way manifest respect for his law?

The answer is, in the same way precisely in which he would have manifested respect for his law, if he had caused the penalty to be literally executed upon his son. If he had caused his son's eyes to be put out, his manifestation of respect for his law would evidently have consisted in his appearing to be willing to submit to an evil on account of its demands. But in causing one of his own eyes to be put out that one of his son's eyes might be spared, he surely manifested an equal willingness to

submit to an evil on account of his law. This, therefore, was as capable of showing respect for his law as the other. When his subjects perceived that he would not so much as spare one of the eyes of his son but at the expense of one of his own, they could not fail of being, impressed with the idea, that he had great respect for his law; because they could not but perceive that he was willing, on account of his law, to submit to a great evil. It matters nothing as to the respect shown to the law, whether, the evil consisted in one thing or another, provided it was a real evil, and was submitted to on account of the law. Zaleucus, therefore, in what he did, manifested great respect for his law. It is evident, however, that the real evil in this case was not so great as must have been suffered if the penalty of the law had been literally executed; for it is not so great an evil, in itself considered, for two men to lose one eye each, as it would be for one to lose both eyes. Yet it seems evident, that Zaleucus manifested as much respect for his law as he could possibly have manifested by causing the law to be executed literally on his son.

The reason is obvious. He submitted to an evil which, every one must see, could not be otherwise than very great in his view, because it inflicted severe pain and loss upon himself. Whereas, if he had executed the law upon his son, his subjects could not have known how great that evil was in his view, because they would not have known how much he loved him. If he had not felt an uncommon degree of love for his guilty son, he would probably have chosen to execute the law, rather than adopt the expedient so painful to himself. If his love for his son had been only of an ordinary character, he would, in all probability, have considered the execution of the law a smaller evil than that to which he actually submitted. If he had executed his law, his subjects would have had no reason to believe that he had any more love for his son than the ordinary affections of a parent. Indeed, this would have been enough to have rendered the execution of the penalty a sufficient exhibition of respect for the law. But it seems he had more than the ordinary affections of a parent. His love was peculiarly strong. Indeed, it was so wonderful, that he chose to inflict severe pain upon himself, rather than execute the full penalty upon his son. It was his uncommon love for his son which rendered the expedient he adopted the smallest evil in his view; while, at the same time, it was the adoption of the expedient which developed the existence of his uncommon affection for his son, in the view of his subjects. It is not necessary, therefore, that the expedient adopted of

destroying one of his own eyes, for the sake of saving one of his son's, should be so great an evil in his view, as he has now manifested, that the loss of both his son's eyes would have been; but only as great as he would have manifested it to be, in case he had executed the law upon his son, and, of consequence, made no disclosure of uncommon affection for him.

Suppose another king, in a neighboring kingdom, had enacted precisely such a law as Zaleucus did. Suppose that his son, also, had transgressed. And suppose that he had proceeded against his son according to the letter of the law, and caused both his eyes to be put out. Would this king have manifested a willingness to submit to a greater evil than that to which Zaleucus submitted? Is it not evident, on the contrary, that if Zaleucus had loved his son no more than this other king would have appeared to love his, he, too, would have spared his own eye, and caused his law to be literally executed, and both the eyes of his son to be put out? On the whole, is it not plain that Zaleucus manifested, at least, as much respect for his law in saving one of his son's eyes at the expense of one of his own, as he could have done by causing the law to be literally executed?

2. How could Zaleucus, in this way, as effectually deter others from the crime of adultery, as he would by the strict execution of the penalty of the law?

To this it may be answered, that when his subjects perceived that he would not even spare his own son, in any other way than that of submitting to so great an evil, they would certainly possess the highest evidence that he was determined, at all events, to support the authority of his law. They would have as much evidence of this, as even the execution of the penalty upon his son could have given them. Hence, so far as the authority of law could restrain, they would be effectually restrained from the prohibited crime. Nor is it less evident,

3. That what Zaleucus did, would manifest his utter abhorrence of the sin of adultery. It must have manifested his irreconcilable hatred of it as fully as the literal execution of his law, even upon his own son, could possibly have done it.

Hence it is evident, that Zaleucus might be just to his law, to his kingdom, and to himself, in pardoning his beloved, though guilty son, out of respect

to his own sufferings.

CHAPTER IV: WHETHER THE OBEDIENCE OF CHRIST CONSTITUTES ANY PART OF THE ATONEMENT.

IN order to show in what the atonement of Christ consists, it has been judged that two inquiries, and only two, would be necessary. Two inquiries, one concerning Christ's sufferings, and another concerning his obedience, must be necessary, because his sufferings and his obedience are distinct things; and they are sufficient, because these two things comprise all which Christ ever did in this world. That it might be ascertained clearly whether the atonement made by Christ consisted entirely in his sufferings, or entirely in his obedience, or partly in one-and partly in the other, it has been judged needful to compare severally his sufferings and his obedience with what rendered an atonement necessary. The first inquiry has been made, the comparison instituted, and the result seen. It has been found, that the sufferings of Christ fully answer all the ends for which atonement was necessary; they remove till the obstacles which stood in the way of God's pardoning sinners; they answer the same valuable purposes which the literal execution of the penalty of the law would have answered. It clearly results, therefore, that the atonement of Christ might consist entirely in his sufferings. If, however, under the second inquiry, in comparing the obedience of Christ with what rendered an atonement necessary, it should appear that this, also, removes the obstacles which stood in the way of the pardon of sinners, and answers the valuable purposes which the complete literal execution of the penalty of the law would have answered, it would seem to be reasonable to conclude, that the atonement consisted partly in obedience and partly in sufferings. But if, instead of this, it should appear clearly that the obedience of Christ does not answer those ends for which atonement was necessary, either in whole or in part, then no such conclusion can be reasonably drawn; but it must follow unavoidably, that the atonement of Christ not only might, but actually did, consist wholly in his sufferings.

In making the proposed inquiry, the obstacles which stood in the way of God's pardoning sinners without an atonement, or, what rendered an atonement necessary, should be kept steadily in view.

1. The law of God threatened transgressors with eternal punishment; and this law being just, and deserving of respect, must be fully supported.

2. The well-being of God's kingdom requires that disobedience should be totally discountenanced, in order to which it, is necessary that the laws of the kingdom be thoroughly executed.

3. God loves holiness, and is infinitely opposed to sin; and it is necessary, in order to display his true character, that this should be manifested. But if God had pardoned sinners without an atonement, he could neither have supported his law, discountenanced wickedness, nor manifested his abhorrence of sin, and love of holiness. Hence if sinners were pardoned, an atonement was indispensably necessary.

If God had literally executed the penalty of his law on transgressors, he would have been just to his law, his kingdom, and his own character. And if he pardoned sinners he must do it in a way which is consistent with his being equally just in each of these respects. The atonement, therefore, must consist in something which answers all these purposes as fully as they would have been answered by the complete execution of the penalty of the law. It must manifest, on the part of God, as high respect for the law, and do as much to support its authority; it must be calculated as effectually to discountenance disobedience; and it must manifest God's regard for holiness, and his hatred of sin, as fully as the complete execution of the law would have done; otherwise it would be really no atonement; it would not open a way in which God might be just to his law, his kingdom, or his own character, in pardoning sinners. But could the obedience of Christ answer all or even any of these ends?

1. Could God have been just to his law in pardoning sinners out of respect to Christ's obedience? Does the obedience of Christ manifest God's respect for his law as fully as the execution of its penalty on the transgressor would have done?

If it has been clearly shown how God would have manifested respect for his law, if he had executed its penalty, and in what such a manifestation of respect must have consisted, the inquiries now proposed may be easily answered. It may easily be shown with equal clearness whether the obedience of Christ is sufficient to manifest the same respect. It must be carefully remembered here, that, if the execution of the penalty of the law on transgressors had not involved a real evil in the view of God, his

causing it to be executed could not have manifested any respect for his law. In case of the execution of the penalty, the manifestation of respect would not have consisted in merely satisfying its literal demands, but rather, in submitting to an evil, for the sake of satisfying those demands. Though it has been shown already, it may not be useless to repeat, that if, when mankind sinned, God had not felt compassionate towards them; if he had been actuated by no benevolence, so that their punishment and misery would not have been an evil in his view, he could not, in this case, have manifested any respect for his law, by executing its penalty upon them. But if he felt benevolent towards them, so that their misery appeared to him a great evil; if, in this view of their misery, he had proceeded to execute the penalty of his law upon them, it is plain he would have shown great respect for his law.

Since, then, it appears plain, that God could no otherwise manifest respect for his law, in executing its penalty, and making the transgressor miserable, than by submitting to what he evidently viewed as an evil, how is it possible that his respect for his law could be manifested by the obedience of Christ? Was that an evil? Was it, could it possibly be, a great evil in the view of God? How could Christ, who was "holy, harmless, undefiled," do any otherwise than obey? Would he not have obeyed perfectly if he had come into the world for any other purpose? If he had not obeyed, would not this have constituted him a sinner, and brought him into a state in which, instead of procuring pardon for others, he would have needed it for himself? Was his obedience more than perfect? Could it have been less? Christ obeyed the divine law, and thus showed it his respect. But how does this manifest God's respect for the law? Angels, too, obey the law perfectly, and thus show it their respect. But this no more proves that God respects the law, than the disobedience of angels and men proves that God is disposed to treat his law with disrespect. If the obedience of Christ be not an evil, in the view of God, it is not seen how it can manifest his respect for his law, so as to constitute an atonement, out of respect to which he can be just to his law in pardoning sinners.

2. Can God be just to his kingdom in pardoning sinners out of respect to the obedience of Christ? Can the obedience of Christ possibly be as effectual in discountenancing wickedness, as the execution of the penalty of the law would have been? It can scarcely be pretended.

If when mankind felt God had executed the penalty upon them, this would have given other moral beings evidence that he was determined to support his law. The evil, involved in the execution of the penalty, would have appeared to them great; and they would have concluded that it must be their unavoidable portion in case they should transgress. Convinced of the divine determination to punish transgressors, they would have been under a powerful restraint. But can it be supposed that the obedience of Christ is calculated to produce the same effect? How can it? What can the obedience of Christ do towards convincing moral beings that God is determined to support his law? Moral beings, who have never sinned, do not consider obedience to God an evil. So far from it obedience is, in their view, a great good. It is delightful to obey themselves, and to see others obey. The obedience of Christ, therefore, is not calculated effectually to deter moral beings from sin. It may, indeed, by way of example allure the righteous to press forward in obedience. But, certainly, it cannot impose any restraint upon the ill disposed. It cannot produce any such effect upon them as would have been produced by the execution of the penalty of the law. It cannot, therefore, answer the same valuable purposes in relation to the support of government. Of consequence, it could not make any atonement, out of regard to which God can be just to his kingdom in pardoning sinners. That it might be a satisfactory atonement, it must be calculated to deter others from disobedience as effectually as the full execution of, the penalty of the law would have done. So far as it falls short of this, it must be utterly inadequate to the purposes of atonement. But since the obedience of Christ cannot be viewed, by holy beings, as an evil, or any token of the divine displeasure, it must be obvious, that it cannot have this tendency in any degree. Hence it is evident, that it must be utterly insufficient to constitute any part of the atonement.

Suppose, for further illustration, that one law of a certain family is, that one child of the family shall attend school, unavoidable hindrances excepted, every day; and that if he needlessly absent himself, he shall feel the rod, as a punishment for his disobedience. After a time, however, the child becomes weary of his school, and, instead of attending according to the command of the parent, spends several days in play or idleness. The parent, informed of the transgression, calls the child to account. He is convicted, and the parent prepares to inflict the punishment. At this instant another child of the family intercedes for the

offender, and offers to make satisfaction. Being asked how, he replies, that he will attend the school himself, as many days as the delinquent has been absent. Now if the parent should accept the offered satisfaction, and dismiss the offender, would this support the law of the family? Would it be calculated, effectually, to deter the child from future disobedience? Would it convince the rest of the family that punishment must be the certain portion of the disobedient? Would it effectually restrain them from trifling with the laws of the family? It cannot be pretended. With as much propriety might a criminal, convicted of murder, be pardoned out of regard to the intercession of some kind and benevolent friend, whose intercessory plea might be, that he, himself, had never murdered.

3. Neither can God be just to himself, in pardoning sinners, out of respect to the obedience of Christ. The reason is obvious. The obedience of Christ cannot make a manifestation of God's hatred of sin, and regard to holiness, to that extent, which would have resulted from an execution of the penalty of the law. Nor is it very conceivable how the obedience of Christ should manifest God's abhorrence of sin, and love for holiness, to any extent, beyond what appears from his giving the law at first. If the obedience of Christ is considered, as perhaps it ought, merely in relation to his human nature, it does not appear that it is capable, any more than the obedience of angels or men, of showing what God's feelings are towards holiness and sin. In this sense it is true, when Christ obeyed he manifested his regard for holiness. And it is equally true, that the obedience of angels manifests their regard for holiness. But neither the one nor the other furnishes evidence that God regards it. If, however, one could, the other must, for the same reason, and, of course, the mission of Christ must have been altogether unnecessary; because the obedience of angels would have answered the same purpose. Nothing can be plainer than this, that the obedience of one being cannot manifest the opposition of another being to disobedience, If it could, then a judge might pardon every criminal, because some honest man had not transgressed the same law; and, at the same time make a full display of his hatred to disobedience, than which nothing can be more absurd.

In favor of considering Christ's obedience to the law, in relation to his human nature merely, it may be observed, that, in his divine nature, he was the lawgiver. And obedience to a law always supposes a previous

obligation to the lawgiver. Hence it would seem that Christ, in his divine nature, could not have been under the law, at least in the same sense that men are. In his divine nature, therefore, he could not have rendered precisely that obedience which man failed to render. Neither can it be supposed, that, in his divine nature, when he was incarnate, he obeyed the divine law in any sense different from that in which God has obeyed it from eternity. It is not seen, therefore, how Christ's obedience to the law could manifest God's regard for holiness, on account of his personal union of the divine and human natures, any more than if no such union had existed. It is not necessary, however, that this point should be urged. Let it be admitted that Christ, even in his divine nature, was made under the law; that Deity in his person, in a strict and proper sense, assumed all the obligations which the divine law imposes on men, and discharged them, and still it could not be shown that this proves God's regard for holiness. If giving the law did not manifest a regard for holiness, certainly obeying it cannot. For if God might be supposed to give the law, from any other motives than a regard to holiness, he certainly might be supposed to obey it, from the same motives. No obedience of Christ, therefore, on account of his being divine, can be a ground for pardoning sinners, any more than his giving the law at first can be a reason for pardoning; that is, a reason why the law ought not to be literally executed; because one no more manifests God's regard for holiness than the other.

How would a king appear who should attempt to justify himself in pardoning every criminal, on the ground that he had never himself transgressed; alleging, that his not transgressing his own law was a sufficient proof that he was utterly opposed to transgression; and that, therefore, he would not punish others? How would this support the authority of his laws? How would it deter his subjects from disobedience? How would he manifest his unshaken attachment to good order among them? Zaleucus enacted a severe law against adultery. His son transgressed. Now what if he had pardoned his son on the ground that himself and others had obeyed the law? Would this have manifested on his part a proper respect for the law? Would it have supported its authority? Would it have had the least tendency to restrain others from the same offence? Would it have manifested any abhorrence of his son's crime? Would his subjects have concluded that Zaleucus was determined, at all events, to support his law; that every transgressor must suffer? It is obvious no such conclusions could be drawn. His obedience

could not have been viewed as any atonement whatever. The pretended satisfaction must have appeared to them a mere imposition. They would have viewed it with contempt.

Thus it appears plain, that the obedience of another can be no ground of pardon for an offender. The obedience of Christ is not sufficient to answer any of those purposes for which atonement was necessary, that sinners might be pardoned. It cannot furnish any ground, on which can be just to his law, to his kingdom, or to his own character, in pardoning the guilty. It appears safe, therefore, to conclude, that it constitutes no part of the atonement. Indeed, it is not possible that any demonstration can be more certain, unless the view which has been given of the reasons why atonement was necessary is altogether incorrect. It is confidently believed, however, that no reasons can be given why an atonement was indispensably necessary, which will not also evince a necessity, equally indispensable, that it should consist in sufferings. Those who have placed the atonement in Christ's obedience, have always found a difficulty in showing why any atonement was necessary. Indeed, that there was any necessity for it, many have actually denied. But unless atonement were necessary, it is inconceivable that a holy and wise God should ever have given up his beloved Son to be a propitiation for sin. And if atonement were necessary, for the reasons which have been assigned, then it is certain that it consisted in sufferings; because the sufferings of Christ fully meet that necessity, whilst nothing else can answer the purpose.

This doctrine is also abundantly evident from the event of Christ's death. For unless the sufferings of Christ were necessary for an atonement, it must be impossible to show any purpose for which they were necessary. But, certainly, they were necessary for something. Christ, surely, did not die in vain. He never could have willingly consented to the death of the cross, if it had not been to answer some valuable purpose. No man, of even common wisdom and goodness, would willingly consent to great sufferings, unless his sufferings might evidently be productive of great good. Much less can we suppose that Christ, who was infinitely wise and good, would have consented to such sufferings as he sustained, unless it had been for the attainment of some good of proportionable value. But what wise and valuable purpose was answered by his death, if it were not the purpose of atonement? What was the great good attained by his sufferings and death, unless it were a consistent ground for pardoning

sinner? It is easy to see that his obedience was necessary, even though it constituted no part of the atonement. But his sufferings could not be necessary on the same ground. His obedience was necessary for himself. Being made under the law, if he had not obeyed, he must have become a sinner. If he had not obeyed, he could not have been the brightness of the Father's glory, and the express image of his person; he could not have been the chief among ten thousand, and altogether lovely; and instead of being the well-beloved of the Father, he must have incurred his displeasure.

But though his obedience was necessary for himself, his sufferings were altogether voluntary. They could not have been for himself. They must, therefore, have been for the purpose of atonement, or for no purpose of which we are able to conceive. It is inconceivable, moreover, that the Father should have consented to his sufferings on this ground. The Father loved him with peculiar affection. Yet he was "delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God," and "by wicked hands" was "crucified and slain." "It pleased the Father to bruise him, and put him to grief; to lay the chastisement of our peace upon him."

Now, how can we possibly account for this, if his sufferings were not necessary for atonement? Are human parents, who tenderly love their children, willing to bruise them and put them to grief, when it is not necessary? Are they willing to give them up to the smiter, and to consent to their death, when it can answer no valuable purpose? How, then, could God, who is infinitely benevolent and compassionate, be willing that his beloved Son should be put to grief, be despised, and even crucified, when it was not necessary? If the sufferings and death of Christ we're not necessary to the pardon of sinners, why did not the Father send his angels and deliver him, when he saw the anguish of his soul in the garden, and heard his fervent prayer that, if it were possible, the cup of his afflictions might pass from him?

Besides, the Scriptures are unintelligible if the atonement of Christ consisted in his obedience; for they plainly ascribe it to his sufferings and death. "Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sin, should live unto righteousness; by whose stripes ye were healed." 1 Pet. 2:24. "He hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows. He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities, the chastisement of our peace was upon him, and with his

stripes we are healed." Isa. 53:4,5. "The Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all." Isa. 53:6. "Yet it pleased the Lord to bruise him; he hath put him to grief." "When thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed--he shall bear their iniquities and he bare the sins of many." Isa. 53:10-12. "Who was delivered for our offences." Rom. 4:25. Nothing can be more plain than these declarations of Scripture.

If language is capable of conveying ideas, these passages certainly prove that the atonement of Christ consisted in his sufferings. In Scripture Christ is frequently called a sacrifice. "For even Christ, our Passover, is sacrificed for us." 1 Cor. 5:7. He is said to have "given himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God, for a sweet-smelling savor." And "now once in the end of the world," to have appeared, "to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself." When he is called a sacrifice, reference is evidently had to his shedding his blood. He is the great propitiatory sacrifice to which the Jewish sacrifices pointed. From these sacrifices, too, an undeniable argument may be adduced, in confirmation of the result of the inquiry already made. The Jews were commanded to offer beasts in sacrifice for their sins. These sacrifices were considered as making atonement for the people. "And the Lord called unto Moses, and spake unto him out of the tabernacle of the congregation, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, If any man of you bring an offering unto the Lord, ye shall bring your offering of the cattle, even of the herd, and of the flock. And if his offering be a burnt sacrifice of the herd, let him offer a male without blemish; he shall offer it of his own voluntary will, at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, before the Lord. And he shall put his hand upon the head of the burnt offering, and it shall be accepted for him, to make atonement for him. And he shall kill the bullock before the Lord; and the priests, Aaron's sons, shall bring the blood, and sprinkle the blood round about upon the altar. And he shall slay the burnt offering, and cut it into his pieces,--and the priest shall burn all on the altar, to be a burnt sacrifice, an offering? made by, fire, of a sweet savor unto the Lord." Lev. 1:1-7, 9.

Thus were the children of Israel commanded concerning their sacrifice for sin; they were to kill the beast, and burn it on the altar; and this sacrifice was to make an atonement for their iniquities. That these sacrifices were designed to prefigure the great propitiatory sacrifice which the Son of God should make of himself, is evident from the account which is given of

them in the New Testament; particularly in the epistle to the Hebrews. The apostle calls these sacrifices a shadow of things to come; an example, pattern, and figure; and he refers them to Christ. "Which are a shadow of things to come; but the body is Christ." Col. 2:17. "Who serve unto the example and shadow of heavenly things." Heb. 8:5. "It was therefore necessary that the pattern of things in the heavens should be purified with these; but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these." Heb. 9:23. "But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins, forever sat down on the right hand of God." Heb. 10:12. "For such a high-priest became us, who needeth not daily, as those high-priests, to offer up sacrifice first for his own sins, and then for the people's; for this he did once, when he offered up himself." Heb. 7:26, 27. From these passages it is evident that the Jewish sacrifices had reference to the sacrifice which Christ would make of himself for the sins of the world. Indeed, they were of little, if any consequence, any, further than as they pointed to this great atoning sacrifice. If, then, we can ascertain what it was in the Jewish sacrifices which was considered as making atonement, we may know what constituted the atonement of Christ.

Now, it is evident, the conduct of the priests did not make atonement. They were no more than the instruments by which the atoning sacrifices were offered. This is all that is intended, when they are spoken of as making the atonement. God required that the beasts which were to be offered should be free from blemishes. But the atonement did not consist in this ceremonial purity. This was only a prerequisite. But the atonement consisted in the sacrifice itself; or in the life or blood of the beast which was offered. This God has expressly declared. "And the bullock for the sin offering, and the goat for the sin offering, whose blood was brought in to make atonement." Lev. 16:27. The children of Israel were forbidden to eat blood; and God assigned this reason for the prohibition, that he had given the blood to make atonement for them. "And whatsoever man there be of the house of Israel, or of the strangers that sojourn among you, that eateth any manner of blood; I will even set my face against that soul that eateth blood and will cut him off from among his people. For the life of the flesh is in the blood; and I have given it to you upon the altar, to make an atonement for your souls; for it is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul." Lev. 17:10, 11. Thus God assures us that it was the life, or blood of the beast offered upon the altar, which made the atonement in

the Jewish sacrifices.

This naturally and even necessarily leads us to the conclusion that the atonement of Christ consisted in his offering up his life or shedding his blood; otherwise the Jewish sacrifices were not proper representations of this great propitiatory sacrifice for the sins of the world. For how could these sacrifices be types, and Christ's sacrifice of himself the antitype, if the atonement by these consisted in shedding blood, but the atonement by Christ in something else? How could these bloody sacrifices be typical of Christ's obedience? On the ground that they were, where would be the resemblance?

It may be further observed, that almost every thing in and about the tabernacle was to be sprinkled with blood, that it might be rendered ceremonially clean. When Moses had spoken every precept to all the people, according to the law, he took the blood of calves find of goats with water, and scarlet wool, and hyssop, and sprinkled both the book and all the people, saying, This is the blood of the testament. which God hath enjoined unto you. Moreover, he sprinkled likewise with blood both the tabernacle and all the vessels of the ministry. And almost all things, by the law, are purged with blood." Heb. 9:19-22. Particularly, the high-priest could not enter into the holy place, which prefigured heaven, without the purification of blood. Now what could be the design of this ceremonial cleansing by blood? Why could not the high-priest, without being cleansed by blood, enter into the holy of holies? Does not all this teach us that we are cleansed from sin and saved from wrath only by the precious blood of Jesus Christ? Does it not show us that it is only by virtue of his blood that we can ever enter into heaven? Does it not necessarily lead our minds to the blood of Christ as that which alone makes atonement for sin? If it do not, in vain do we attempt to derive any instruction from these things.

This representation also agrees with the general tenor of Scripture on this subject. We have already examined a considerable number of passages, which expressly point us to the death of Christ as that which makes atonement. It may be shown, moreover, from many other Scriptures, that every thing belonging to our salvation which may be considered a fruit of atonement, is also grounded on the love of Christ. If we are redeemed, or bought, the blood of Christ is the price; if we are cleansed, or sanctified, it is by the blood of sprinkling; if we are reconciled, the blood of Christ hath

broken down the partition wall. Indeed every blessing of the gospel is a blood-bought blessing.

Christ is abundantly represented as redeeming and purchasing his saints, as captives are redeemed from captivity by the payment of a price. "Who gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil world." Gal. 1:4. "Christ hath loved us, and hath given himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet smelling savor." Eph. 5:2. "Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity." Tit. 2:14. "Ye are bought with a price." 1 Cor. 7:23. These passages have evident reference to the death of Christ as the ransom or price which he gave for us. "The church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood." Acts 20:28. "Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, but with the precious blood of Christ." 1 Pet. 1:18, 19.

The atonement of Christ is that which lays a foundation for our sanctification and deliverance from sin. "Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it, that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water, by the word." Eph. 5:25, 26. "But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour towards man appeared, not by works of righteousness, which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost, which he shed on us abundantly, through Jesus Christ our Saviour." Tit. 3:4, 5. "For their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth." John 17:19. But, according to the voice of inspiration, it is the blood or death of Christ, which is available here. "Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood, he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us." Heb. 9:12. "For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer, sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh; how much more shall the blood of Christ, who, through the eternal Spirit, offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?" Heb. 9:13, 14. "The bodies of those beasts, whose blood is brought into the sanctuary for sin, are burnt without the camp. Wherefore, Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate." Heb. 13:11, 12. And agreeably with this, the apostle John says expressly, "The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin." 1 John 1:7.

It is through the atonement surely, that sinners are brought into a state of reconciliation with God. But this, the Scriptures assure us, is effected by the death or blood of Christ. "For if when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son." Rom. 5:10. "But now in Christ Jesus, ye who sometimes were far off, are made nigh by the blood of Christ. For he is our peace, who hath made both [Jews and Gentiles] one; and that he might reconcile both in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby." Eph. 2:13, 14, 16. "And having made peace through the blood of his cross." Col. 1:20. "And you, that were sometimes alienated, and enemies in your minds by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled, in the body of his flesh, through death." Col. 1:21.

The atonement of Christ is certainly that on account of which saints are pardoned and justified. But in the Bible, saints are said to be pardoned and justified by the blood; and death of Christ. "Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus; whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood." Rom. 3:24, 25. "Being now justified by his blood." Rom. 5:9. "In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins." Eph. 1:7. Said our Lord at the institution of the ordinance of the supper, "This is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins." Matt. 26:28. And the apostle in his epistle to the Hebrews, declared. "Without shedding of blood there is no remission." Heb. 9:22. According to these Scriptures, believers are forgiven and justified solely on account of the death of Christ, or the effusion of his blood as a sacrifice for sin.

Once more. It is evident from the sacred oracles, that all, who obtain salvation, are saved by virtue of Christ's atonement. The whole gospel is proof of this. But there are several passages which very plainly show that salvation is on account of Christ's sufferings and death. "And for this cause he is the Mediator of the new testament, that by means of death for the redemption of the transgressions, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance." Heb. 9:15.

Now once, in the end of the world, hath he appeared to put away sins by the sacrifice of himself. Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time, without sin, unto salvation;" that is, unto the complete salvation of an that look for him. Heb. 9:26, 28. "For when we were without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. Much more, then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him:" Rom. 5:6, 9. "For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us." 1 Thess. 5:9, 10. Here the apostle plainly tells us, that we receive eternal salvation through Christ, on account of his death. "We see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with, glory and honor, that he, by the grace of God, should taste death for every man. For it became him for whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings:" Heb. 2:9, 10. "Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered; and being made perfect [through sufferings], he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him." Heb. 5:8, 9. "Having, therefore, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus:" Heb. 10:19.

In this last passage, we perceive an evident allusion to the high-priest's entering into the most holy place of the tabernacle, through the cleansing of blood. By this, the spirit of inspiration would evidently teach us that the way in which we must enter into heaven, is by being cleansed in the blood of Christ. Indeed, all these Scriptures direct us to the blood of Christ, as being emphatically that on account of which believers are saved. The redeemed in heaven, undoubtedly, must know precisely what that is, on account of which they are admitted to that blissful world. Yet from a passage in the book of Revelation, which describes their heavenly worship, it appears that they consider the blood of Christ as the foundation of all their glory, "And they sang a new song, saying, thou art worthy to take the book and to open the seals thereof; for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood." Rev. 5:9.

Thus the sufferings and death of Christ are singled out in Scripture, and spoken of by way of eminence in a multitude of places, as being the price of our purchased and as laying a foundation for our sanctification, for our reconciliation to God, for our forgiveness, and, finally, for our eternal salvation in heaven. The sufferings and death of Christ, too, completely secure all the ends for which atonement was necessary; remove all the obstacles which stood in the way of God's showing favor to mankind, and making them eternally happy after they had sinned; and answer all the valuable purposes which could have been answered by the execution of the penalty of the law.

How, then, can there be any room to doubt whether the atonement of Christ consisted in his sufferings and death? Is not this idea plainly supported by all the representations of Scripture on the subject? Indeed, is it possible that the subject should be more plain? Especially, when we reflect that the obedience of Christ does not secure any of the ends which rendered an atonement necessary, as it could not in the nature of things answer the purposes which might have been answered by the execution of the penalty of the law, the very thing which was necessary in order that the penalty might be consistently remitted; and when we consider, moreover, what still more ought to satisfy every believer in revealed religion, that the notion that the atonement of Christ consisted in his obedience, by no means agrees with the uniform voice of inspiration on the subject.

Indeed, it may justly be questioned, whether there is a single passage in the Bible, which fairly implies that the active obedience of Christ constituted any part of the atonement. Perhaps there is no passage more liable to be so understood than Jer. 23:6. "This is his name whereby he shall be called, The Lord our righteousness." But what is there, even in this, which fairly implies that the obedience of Christ constituted the atonement either in whole, or in part? What is there in it which any common reader, unbiased by preconceived opinions, would be liable to understand in that way? This passage was a mere prediction that a name, by which Christ should be called, would be, "The Lord our righteousness." Undoubtedly, the reason why he should be so called

was, because he would make an atonement for his people, and open a consistent way for their pardon and admission into heaven; to that happiness to which they would have been entitled by their own righteousness, if they had never sinned. The passage may be considered as implying this. But it certainly does not give any intimation concerning the particular thing which Christ would do to make that atonement, or the manner in which he would open that consistent way of pardon. If his atonement had consisted in his active obedience, this text would have given no intimation of it; nor could he, with any more propriety, be called "The Lord our righteousness," than he now can, in view of his sufferings and death. He is, also, said to be made unto his people "wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption:" But, surely, no one would think of arguing from hence, that wisdom constituted any part of the atonement.'

Another passage which has been supposed, by some to favor the notion that the atonement of Christ consisted in his obedience is, Isaiah 42:21, "The Lord is well pleased for his righteousness' sake; he will magnify the law and make it honorable." If it were unquestionable that this should be considered as referring to Christ, and should it be granted that he did magnify, the law and make it honorable in any sense, which may be supposed; still it would by no means follow, that this constituted any part of the atonement. Doubtless our Lord did many things on earth which were never designed as any part of his propitiatory work. So that if all were granted concerning this passage which can reasonably be asked, still it would avail nothing. The needed proof must still be sought somewhere else. Many good critics, however, suppose the passage has no reference to Christ. They think it might be more correctly translated, "Jehovah delighteth in his righteous one; he will prosper and honor his administration." (See also, Poole, in loc.) Those who have considered this passage as evidence that the atonement of Christ consisted in his active obedience, have generally supposed that the atonement was necessary to show the justice of the law. They have apprehended that, if God had forgiven sinners without an atonement, the justice of the law could not have appeared; that, therefore, Christ obeyed the law, made it appear just and reasonable, and so made atonement.

Now if it were admitted that an atonement was necessary on this ground, still it would not be easy to see how the obedience of Christ could make the law appear reasonable. If the law were, not reasonable in itself, aside from the obedience of Christ, his obedience surely could not make it reasonable. Indeed, unless the law were good, antecedently to his obeying it, there could be no reason why he should obey it, nor any merit in his obedience. The reasonableness of the law, therefore, instead of resting on the obedience of Christ, is itself the very foundation on which the reasonableness of his obedience rests. And if the obedience of Christ did not make the law reasonable, it certainly could not make it appear to be reasonable in the view of creatures. For, if the law appeared to creatures to be unreasonable, they would, of course, perceive no reason why it should be obeyed by Christ, or by any other being. The truth is, the law is in itself most reasonable; and nothing more is necessary that creatures may perceive it to be reasonable, than that they should understand those things on which its reasonableness depends. But its reasonableness does not depend on the conduct of any being in the universe, either of God, or of Christ, or of creatures. It depends on what the law itself requires, on the capacities of the beings to whom it is addressed, and the relations they sustain to God and to each other. Only let creatures clearly understand these things, and they could not fail to perceive the perfect reasonableness of the divine law. A little candid and impartial attention to the word of God would teach them this, which, from the mere obedience of Christ, they could never learn.

Another consideration which clearly shows the incorrectness of this scheme is, that it manifestly inverts the order of divine truth. For, if the obedience of Christ makes the law appear reasonable, and so makes atonement, it must certainly follow that instead of discovering the grace of the gospel, in the reasonableness and holiness of the law by which men are condemned, we must go to the gospel itself to learn that the law is reasonable. Besides, if we do not perceive the reasonableness of the law, aside from any consideration of what is contained in the gospel, how, can we ever obtain any just views of the gospel? For, unless the law first appear holy, just, and good, how can we view the gospel as any other than a dispensation designed to deliver us from the unjust punishment of an unreasonable law? It is evident, therefore, that neither Christ's obedience, nor his atonement, was designed to manifest the reasonableness of the law. So far from this, that the reasonableness of

the law is the very foundation of the gospel, and must be perceived before the propriety of that dispensation can be discovered.

Besides, as has been observed, Jesus Christ, both as God and as man, was as much bound to obey the law as any other being in the universe. It is true, as God he was not under law in every sense as a creature is; for there was no being above him to command him, to threaten him with a penalty, or to promise him a reward. Yet he was as really bound by the moral law, that eternal rule of rectitude, as any creature is. It is the glory of the divine Being, that all his feelings and all his conduct are in perfect conformity with this unerring rule. And, as a creature, Jesus Christ was, in every sense, as much bound to obey the law as is any other creature. Neither as God, nor as man, therefore, was he any more holy than he ought to be. How then, could his obedience, any more than the obedience of any other being, make the law appear reasonable, or make atonement?

The notion that atonement was necessary to make the law appear reasonable, is evidently incorrect. No obscurity attending the law precluded any obstacle in the way of God's pardoning sinners. The real difficulties which stood in the way of this have been brought into view. But these the obedience of Christ could not remove. If God had pardoned sinners without an atonement, he could not have appeared just; he would not have shown that he approved of the law, loved holiness, hated sin, and was determined to maintain good government. How, then, could he omit punishing the transgressors of his law? Here was the necessity of atonement, which Paul stated, "to declare God's righteousness, that he might be just, and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus:" What, then, if the obedience of Christ did make the law appear reasonable (which, however, it neither did nor could), how would this remove any difficulty which stood in the way of the salvation of sinners? Surely, God would not show the righteousness of his character by refusing to punish the transgressor of a law which was made to appear so reasonable and good ! Hence, it appears) that the scheme which places the atonement in the obedience of Christ, is totally without foundation, either in reason or the word of God.

There is another scheme, which, while it allows that the sufferings of Christ atone for sin, supposes that his active obedience procures heaven for believers, which, with the most important passages adduced to support it, will be considered in another place

CHAPTER V: FULL ATONEMENT, AND SALVATION WHOLLY BY GRACE, CONSISTENT WITH EACH OTHER.

THE Scriptures plainly teach, that though Christ has made a full and complete atonement for sin, yet the salvation of sinners is entirely of grace. "By grace ye are saved." Eph. 2:5. Many, however, have found it difficult to treat the subject as though these doctrines were reconcilable, the one with the other. But this difficulty has probably arisen from mistaken views of the nature of the atonement which Christ has made. Understanding the atonement to be, literally, a purchase, or the payment of a debt, some have inferred from it, that, since Christ is represented as a propitiation for the sins of the whole world, all men must be saved; others, that, inasmuch as it is evident that all will not be saved, the atonement could not be made for all; and others, again, that, if sinners are saved on account of the atonement, their pardon and salvation cannot be of grace.

These conclusions are much more consistent with the premises, from which they are respectively drawn, than either the premises or conclusions are with the truth. For, if the atonement did consist in the payment of a debt literally, it seems very obvious that there could not be any grace exercised in the acquittance of sinners, and that atonement and actual salvation, must be co-extensive. If Christ has really paid the debt of sinners, they, of course, must be free. Justice must be satisfied, and can make no further demand. On this ground it must, indeed, follow, that if Christ died for all, then all will be saved; and that if all are not saved, then he could not have died for all. And it equally follows, that none can be saved by grace. Their debt being paid, it cannot be forgiven.

Since, therefore, the Scriptures represent the pardon and salvation of sinners as being wholly of grace, we may be certain that the atonement cannot be the payment of a debt, nor, strictly, of the nature of a purchase. This, too, it is apprehended, has already been made evident, in what has been shown concerning the necessity and nature of atonement. But since many at the present day, have adopted this scheme of the atonement,

and have deduced sentiments from it which are of the most dangerous tendency, it may not be improper to examine, a little more directly, the reasoning by which they endeavor to make their scheme consistent with the exercise of grace, in the actual bestowment of pardon and salvation,

The Scriptures are so very explicit and particular, respecting the terms of pardon and justification, that few believers in divine revelation can be found, who do not appear anxious to have it understood that, in some way or other they hold the doctrines of grace. It has been said by some, that though atonement be the payment of a debt, yet the pardon of a sinner may be, called an act of grace, because it is founded in other acts, which certainly are acts of grace. God's giving his Son to make atonement, and his actually making it, are acts of grace. And since the pardon of sinners has, its foundation on these gracious acts, it may be called an act of grace itself. But this is, certainly, strange reasoning. To say that pardon is an act of grace, only because it is grounded on other acts which are gracious, is nothing less than to say, that it is an act of grace, though it is not an act of grace.

Besides, on the ground of the scheme in question, it is futile to talk of pardon. When a debt is paid, what can remain to be forgiven? The notion, however, is not more inconsistent with itself, than it is with Scripture. "In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace." Eph. 1:7. "Being justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus." Rom. 3:24. These passages of Scripture, and many others of similar import, plainly imply, that forgiveness and justification are themselves acts of grace, and not merely that they are grounded on other acts of this nature.

Nor is this all. Pardon, or forgiveness, in its very nature, implies grace. So far as any crime is pardoned at all, it is pardoned graciously. It is impossible to forgive in any other way. Pardon, on the ground of justice, would be a contradiction in terms. To pardon a sinner is to treat him more favorably than he deserves; to release him from a punishment which he has justly merited; and to confer on him a favor, to which he has no claim. Pardon always implies this. If a criminal be pardoned, he is treated more favorably than he deserves. His release from punishment is a favor which he can have no right to demand. This circumstance, that he cannot demand it, constitutes his release an act of grace; and the same

circumstance renders it an act of forgiveness. Without this circumstance, no acquittal can be an act, either of pardon or grace.

Others, again, among those who consider the atonement as the payment of a debt, have attempted to solve the difficulty by saying that, though the pardon of the sinner is not an act of grace to Christ, since he has paid the debt; yet it is an act of grace to the sinner, because the debt was not paid by himself, but by Christ, his surety.

It, may be observed in reply, that as to the release of the debtor, it makes no difference who pays the debt. Whoever may make the payment, if the debt is paid, it can never be forgiven. If a creditor has received payment of his demand, he is under obligation to discharge his debtor, whether he paid the debt himself or some other person paid it for him. This must be evident to every candid mind. No creditor can refuse to give up an obligation after it is fully paid, without the most manifest injustice. But an act of grace is what, no being can be under obligation, to him who receives it, to perform. If a being is under obligation to another to perform an act in his favor, that act must be an act of justice, and not of grace. Hence there can be no grace in giving up a demand which is fully satisfied.

What, then, becomes of the boasted arguments of those who plead for universal grace, on the ground that Christ has paid the debt for an men. Alas, what gross delusion! They talk about grace, free grace for all men, and yet exclude every idea of grace in the pardon of sinners, by alleging that Christ has paid their debt. If their debt is paid, they can never be pardoned. But if sinners may be pardoned for Christ's sake, then their debt is not paid; and, consequently, God is under no obligation to exercise pardon on account of the atonement. Thus it appears that the argument for universal salvation, deduced from the notion that Christ has paid the debt for sinners, is totally groundless. Take it which way we will, it is mere delusion.

The truth is, Christ has paid no man's debt. It is true, indeed, that our deliverance is, in Scripture, sometimes called a redemption; and this word refers to the deliverance of a prisoner from captivity, which is often effected by the payment of a sum of money. Christ is also called a ransom," and we are said to be "bought with a price." But it must be remembered that these are figurative expressions. They are designed to

communicate this idea, that as the payment of money as the price of liberty is the ground on which prisoners are released from captivity, so the atonement of Christ is the ground on which sinners are pardoned, or set free from a sentence of condemnation. These passages, thus understood, appear intelligible and consistent; whereas, understood literally, they would contradict other plain declarations of the Word of God. For sinners we certainly represented in Scripture as being pardoned of free grace; which, it is evident, cannot be said with propriety of captives whose liberty is purchased. Besides, these passages literally bring into view the payment of money and the discharge of debt. But surely no one will suppose that sinners have literally plundered the treasury of heaven, and deprived God of property, and that the business of the Redeemer was to refund the money which they had thus wrongfully taken away. We have not been "redeemed with corruptible things, as silver, and gold; but with the precious blood of Christ." It is evident, therefore, that these are metaphorical expressions, and were never designed to be taken in a sense strictly literal.

The Scriptures, indeed, use a variety of metaphors in describing the necessity and nature of atonement. When sin is represented under a figure, we find the Saviour introduced under a corresponding figure. If sin is a disease, and "the whole head sick, and the heart faint;" Christ is a physician. There is balm in Gilead, and a physician there. If sin is hunger and thirst, Christ is the bread and water of life, If sin is error, in a road or path, Christ is then the way. And if sin is a debt, Christ is then a price.

Let passages of this description be understood literally, and they immediately become not only unintelligible, but plainly contradictory. But let them be understood metaphorically, as was evidently designed, and they are intelligible, consistent, and fraught with instruction. If sin is called a disease, we are not to understand that it may be healed as easily as bodily diseases are, or in the same manner; but we are rather to infer, from this representation, the greatness of the evil; and that as diseases of the body which are not healed bring forth, so sin, if it be not destroyed in us, will inevitably issue in a more dreadful death of the immortal soul. If sin be spoken of as a debt, it is not to show us that it may be paid by another; but it is rather to signify to us that our sins render us accountable to God, though not precisely in the same manner, yet as certainly as debtors are to their creditors, and that a day of reckoning

must come. If sin is a debt, and also a disease, and Christ a price to pay the debt, and a physician to heal the disease, we are no more authorized to infer that he has paid the debt, than we are to conclude that he has healed the disease, which we know is not the fact. The truth is, neither debt nor disease does specifically describe the nature of sin. Nor does the payment of a debt, nor the healing of a disease, with any greater literal correctness describe the work of the Redeemer.

From what has been shown concerning the necessity and nature of the atonement, it is evident: not only that it does not at all consist in the payment of a debt, but that it is perfectly consistent with free grace in the pardon of sinners. Grace and justice may be considered as opposite terms. Where one begins, the other necessarily ends. That action which justice requires cannot be of grace. An action, to be gracious, must be unmerited; and, if unmerited, it must be what no being is under obligation to perform. An act of grace is what may be performed, or not performed, without any injustice. The bestowment of a favor, which might have been withholden without any injustice, is an act of grace; but nothing short of this can be grace. The term justice is used in three different ways.

1. It is used in relation to the property of individuals.
2. It is used in relation to the moral character of individuals.
3. It is used in relation to the interest and well-being of society at large.

The first kind of justice, which has respect to exchanging property, consists in giving every man his own without respect to moral character. To be just in this sense of the word; debtors must satisfy the equitable demands of their creditors, and creditors, when these demands are satisfied, must give up their obligations. That grace which would be opposed to justice in this sense, would consist in giving money where it is not owed, or in giving up obligations without receiving their value. But, as the controversy between God and sinners is not concerning property, this kind of justice and grace is not at all concerned in the present inquiry.

It is the second kind of justice which relates to the treatment of moral beings, in regard to their character, to which this inquiry has respect. To treat moral beings exactly according to their real character, is an act of justice. To treat them more favorably than is correspondent with their character, would be an act of grace. To treat them more severely than is

correspondent with their character, would be an act of injustice. Now, this kind of justice has not been satisfied, in the least degree, by the death of Christ. His sufferings have made no alteration, at least no favorable alteration, in the character of sinners. Their personal demerit is as great as it would have been if no atonement had been made. Indeed, in a multitude of instances, it is much greater. For if Christ had not come, they had not had so great sin; but now, they have both seen and hated, both him and his Father. Mankind are now by nature, subjects of the same evil heart of unbelief of which they were the subjects, before Christ appeared to make atonement for sin. It is still true that their throat is an open sepulchre, the poison of asps is under their lips, their mouth is full of cursing and bitterness, their feet are swift to do mischief [to shed blood], and the way of peace they have not known. It is still true, that their whole head is sick, and their whole heart faint. In point of personal merit, even now they deserve the damnation of hell. Should God now send them to that place of torment and confine them there for ever, he would treat them according to their personal character, and, consequently, do them no injustice. But if, instead of sending them to hell, he is pleased to pardon them and restore them to his favor, he treats them more favorably than is correspondent with their moral character, and, consequently, their salvation must be entirely of grace.

And, since it is evident that the moral character of sinners is not made better by the atonement of Christ; and, of course, that this kind of justice, which consists in treating moral beings according to their character, is not in the least degree satisfied; it must follow, that there is as much grace exercised in pardoning sinners out of respect to the atonement, as there could possibly have been in case they had been pardoned without any atonement. Indeed, it was utterly impossible, in the nature of things, that this kind of justice could be satisfied. Nothing which Christ did, either in obedience or sufferings, could possibly alter the moral deserts of sinners. Nor was it, in the least, necessary that justice, in this sense of the term, should be satisfied. The moral desert of the sinner, considered in itself, presented no obstacle in the way of his salvation. If it had, it would have been an obstacle in the way of grace, and, if it had been removed, grace would have been excluded.

It is the third kind of justice mentioned, which has been satisfied by the death of Christ. This, if it be proper to call it justice, is fully satisfied. For,

by the sufferings and death of Christ to atone for sin, God has fully manifested a proper respect for his law, has made it evident that he loveth righteousness and hateth iniquity, and has done what was needful to deter his other subjects from disobedience; so that he may now pardon sinners without doing any injustice to his kingdom in general. He may be just, and the justifier of him who believeth in Jesus. But while the obstacles arising from the regard which God had to his own character, and the highest good of his kingdom, which, without atonement, opposed the salvation of sinners, are all happily removed by the propitiation of Christ; still, as has been shown, the moral character of sinners remains unaltered, their personal ill-desert the same. Hence, notwithstanding God may pardon them without injuring his kingdom, yet he is under no more obligation to do it as it respects them, than he would have been, if no atonement had ever been made; nor will he do them any more injustice in sending them to hell, than he would have done in doing the same thing, if Christ had never died. It is evident, therefore, that there is as much grace exercised in the pardon of sinners, as there would have been, if they had been pardoned without any atonement whatever.

What, then, must be the disappointment of those, who flatter themselves that all mankind must be saved, because Christ has made atonement for their sins. How inconsistent must it be, to talk of salvation by grace, and yet suppose, that God is under obligation to save all mankind on account of Christ's death! As well might it be argued, that God is under obligation to save fallen angels, for whom Christ never died.

CHAPTER VI: ANSWER TO AN OBJECTION; IN WHICH IT IS SHOWN IN WHAT SENSE CHRIST DIED IN THE ROOM AND STEAD OF SINNERS; THAT HIS SUFFERINGS WERE NOT PUNITIVE, ETC.

OBJECTION.

THE Scriptures evidently teach that Christ died in the room and stead of sinners; and if he did thus die, they must be exempted. If A. enlist into the army, and B. offer to go in his room and is accepted, most certainly A. is exempted from service. So if Christ really tasted death for every man, and died in their room and stead, then must they be exempted.

ANSWER.

It is granted that if Christ died in the room and stead of sinners, in the same sense in which B. is supposed to go into service, in the room and stead of A., then all those for whom he died must be exempted from death. It is very plain, however, that in this case their deliverance would not be of grace. There can be no grace in A.'s exemption from service, when it has been procured by an acceptable substitute. Nor would there be any grace in releasing a captive, When a full ransom had been paid. Therefore, since it is evident that the pardon and salvation of sinners is of mere grace, it must be equally evident that those passages of Scripture which speak of Christ as dying in the room of sinners, and as giving his life a ransom for them, are not to be understood literally. They are to be regarded as metaphorical expressions, designed to communicate this general idea, that as B.'s consenting to perform the services which A. stood engaged to perform is the ground on which A. is released; and as the payment of money, or some other equivalent, is the ground of the release of a captive; so the death of Christ is the ground on which believing sinners are pardoned and saved.

Indeed, the metaphor may be carried still further. A. is released on the principle that B.'s services will answer the same valuable purposes which would be answered by the services of A. The captive, too, is released on the principle that the money, or other consideration paid as a ransom, will

answer as valuable purposes as might be expected from retaining the captive in servitude. So the believing sinner is released from punishment on the principle that the sufferings of Christ answer the same valuable purposes which the execution of the penalty of the law would have answered in honoring and supporting the law, displaying the character of God, and securing the highest interest of his kingdom. These important ends being as well answered by the death of Christ as they could have been by the execution of the penalty of the law, God has declared his righteousness for the remission of sins, and can be just to his law, to his kingdom, and to himself, and yet be the justifier of those who believe in Jesus.

When the righteous penalty of a law is executed upon a transgressor, it is said to take away his guilt, or to remove his desert of punishment, If this principle be correct, which it is presumed none will deny, it must follow that if it were possible for sinners to suffer the full penalty of the divine law and still live, this would effectually remove their ill desert. If the guilt and ill desert of sinners could have been removed in this way, and this should be considered a valuable object which might have been secured by executing the penalty of the law on them, it must be acknowledged that this is an object which the death of Christ does not effect. Nor was it possible that it should effect this; because guilt or ill desert is a personal thing which cannot be removed either by the sufferings of a substitute, or by any thing else, except the suffering of the full penalty by the guilty person. Neither was it necessary that the sufferings of Christ should take away ill desert, in order to their being a sufficient atonement. It is enough if they remove the obstacles which stood in the way of the pardon of sinners which have already been considered. If ill desert had been removed, it would have precluded the necessity and even the possibility of pardon. When the full penalty of the law has been executed on a criminal for any offence, there can be no such thing as pardoning him for that crime. As the law has nothing more to exact, there is nothing to be forgiven. So if ill desert could be removed in any other way when it should be removed, as no evil could be justly inflicted, there could be nothing to forgive.

If, then, Christ had removed or taken away the ill desert of sinners, there could be no grace manifested in their salvation. In this sense, therefore, the death of Christ cannot be considered as being in the room and stead

of sinners. Hence, whether the Scriptures do teach that Christ died in the room and stead of sinners, must depend entirely on the meaning which is affixed to these terms. If we understand by them that the sufferings of Christ have answered all the purposes which the execution of the penalty of the law would have answered and occasioned, provided it had been possible for sinners to survive this execution, both in respect to supporting the divine government and removing the ill desert of sinners, it is evident the Scriptures teach no such doctrine. But if nothing more be intended by Christ's dying in our room and stead than that he suffered, that it might clearly appear that God would support and honor his law, that the divine character might be clearly exhibited and vindicated, and the highest interest of the universe secured; in short, that God might be just to his law, to his character, and to his kingdom, and yet the justifier of him who believeth in Jesus; then it is, unquestionably, a doctrine plainly taught in Scripture.

If, however, this be all that is intended by this form of speech, in our room and in our stead, it may not be unsuitable to, inquire whether other words and forms of expression might not be used, which would communicate the idea with much greater clearness. Notwithstanding the long practice even of the best writers has sanctioned the use of these terms, yet surely we should not, on that account, indulge such a fondness for them as to refuse to lay them aside, if continuing the use of them would endanger the salvation of one soul, who, through ignorance or willingness to be deluded, might infer from them that since Christ has died in our room and stead, we certainly cannot be liable to death. If, indeed, the terms were scriptural, these observations might with more appearance of justice be deemed sacrilegious; though even in that case they would, like many other Scripture phrases, need explanation. But the truth is, that though they have been so long and so often used that many, probably, are scarcely aware of the fact, yet they really have no place in the Bible.

Those passages of Scripture, which have usually been relied on as proof that in a strict and literal sense Christ died in our room and stead, by no means prove the doctrine. We read, indeed, that "Christ died for the ungodly;" that "Christ died for us;" and that Christ hath once suffered, the just for the unjust." But surely these expressions are far from proving that he died in our room and stead, in a strict and literal sense. An impartial reader would be quite as likely to understand them to mean that he died

for our benefit, or on our account, as that he died in our room and stead. Nor is there any thing in the original terms, _____ and _____, which restricts them to such a meaning. The word _____, indeed, in some situations may mean instead of; but in other situations, it certainly signifies nothing more than for the sake of, for the benefit of, &c. In Eph. 5:31, it merely signifies for. "For this cause;" ______. In Heb. 12:2, it signifies for the sake of. "Who, for the joy that was set before him;" _____, &c. In Matt. 17:27, it signifies for the benefit of. "That take, and give unto them, for me and thee;" _____, &c. The same may be shown of _____. It sometimes signifies in the stead of, and sometimes for, on account of, &c. Nothing can be determined, with certainty, merely from these prepositions, whether the phrase, died for the ungodly, should be understood instead of the ungodly, or for the benefit of the ungodly, We read concerning Christ that "he was made sin for us;" by which we understand that he was made a sin offering. But it cannot reasonably be supposed, that he was made a sin offering instead of us; that is, that we must have been made a sin offering, in the same sense in which he was, if he had not substituted himself for us.

Nor when we read that "he was sacrificed for us," are we to suppose that if he had not been made a sacrifice, we must have been sacrificed. "He died for our, sins;" but, most certainly, not instead of our sins. Such expressions as these are to be understood and explained, in agreement with the general tenor of Scripture on this subject. And being thus understood, they will afford no countenance to the notion that Christ died in the room and stead of sinners, in such a sense as to render them any less liable to punishment, merely on account of his death, than they would have been, if he had never died. If all mankind understood the doctrine of atonement by Jesus Christ, there would be less danger of conveying wrong ideas by using the terms, in our room and stead, than there is at present. Or, if these terms, as they are used, were universally understood in such a sense as to communicate the precise idea which the Scriptures inculcate concerning the substitution of Christ's sufferings--for the execution of the penalty of the law, the use of them would certainly be unexceptionable. But that neither of these things is true, is evident from the melancholy fact, that many of the wicked are confidently expecting future blessedness, merely because, they believe that Christ had paid their debt, by suffering the penalty of the law in their room and stead. This belief, in all probability, has been induced, in a multitude of

instances, by an improper use of these unscriptural terms.

Another thing which has probably contributed in no small degree to confirm men in this delusion, is calling the sufferings of Christ punitive justice, the punishment due to sinners, and the penalty of the law. For when the sinner is led to believe that Christ has suffered punitive justice, the very punishment due to him for his sins, and that, too, in his room and stead, the inference is too plain to his darkened understanding, and too pleasing to his depraved heart, to be easily relinquished. When the premises have been laid for him by teachers of divine truth, and he has arrived at the pleasing conclusion by a little process of his own mind, or by the aid of those who directly strengthen "the hands of the wicked, that he should not return from his wicked way, by promising him life," it is no matter of wonder, that he should be unwilling to be driven from this "refuge of lies." While such is the dangerous tendency of such forms of expression, it is not only certain that they have no place in the Bible, but that they are manifestly incorrect.

The Scriptures do not teach us that the sufferings of Christ were punitive, the punishment due to sinners, or the penalty of the divine law. Nor is it necessary on any account that they should be so considered. It is sufficient that they answer the same valuable purposes, with respect to the law, the character, and the government of God, which inflicting the punishment due to sinners, or the execution of the penalty of the law would have answered. That they do fully answer these purposes, is abundantly evident. Christ was set forth to be a propitiation, to declare God's righteousness for the remission of sins, that he might be just, and the justifier of him who believeth in Jesus. And if the sufferings of Christ were designed to answer the same valuable purposes, with respect to the law, character, and government of God, which the punishment due to sinners, or the execution of the penalty of the law would have answered, then it is evident that they are different things. That one thing answers the purpose of another, certainly implies that it is a different thing from that, the purpose of which it answers; for we never speak of a thing as answering the purpose of itself. Christ has often been called a substitute for sinners. If there be any correctness in calling him a substitute for sinners, it must be because his sufferings were, in some way, designed as a substitute for their punishment. But if his sufferings are in any sense a substitute for their punishment, it must be evident they cannot be

themselves that very punishment; for a thing cannot be a substitute for itself.

If we keep in view the obstacles which stood in the way of the pardoning of sinners without an atonement, and what Christ has done to remove those obstacles, it will be easy to perceive the precise object of his substitution. If a correct account has been given of the necessity of an atonement, and of what Christ has done to meet that necessity; and if the penalty of the divine law, and the execution of that penalty, may be considered as distinct things; it will follow that the sufferings of Christ were a substitute for the execution of the penalty, rather than for the penalty itself. For it has been shown that God could not be just to his law, his character, or his kingdom, without executing the penalty of his law on transgressors, unless something else could be done, which, as an atonement, would answer the same purposes as well; that is, as well as the execution of the penalty. For it is evident that if the law were transgressed, the penalty itself, without being executed, could answer no valuable purpose. Hence it must be the execution of the penalty, for which the sufferings of Christ were substituted.

The execution of a penalty, and the punishment or sufferings of the guilty, on whom the penalty is executed, may be viewed as distinct things. They are, indeed, inseparably connected; but this connection does not imply that they are not different things, but the contrary. The just punishment of a guilty person, when suffered, constitutes part of his character. It is on this ground that enduring a just punishment is supposed to remove ill desert. But the execution of the penalty affects only the character of him who enforces the law.

Hence it is evident the execution of the penalty of a law and the suffering of an offender, which is a consequence of such an execution, are distinct things, and exhibit different characters. One exhibits the character of him who enforces the law, and the other the character of him who suffers the penalty. Since these are different things, it must here be evident, also, that the sufferings of Christ must have been designed as a substitute for the execution of the penalty of the law, rather than for the punishment due to sinners. For it must be obvious, that the sufferings of Christ must have been designed to exhibit the character of God, honoring and supporting his law, showing his opposition to sin, and promoting the interest of his kingdom, rather than to make an exhibition of the character

of sinners in endless misery, enduring the punishment due to them for sin, and thus removing their ill desert. It appears clearly that it was indispensably necessary that such an exhibition of the divine character should be made, in order that sinners might be consistently pardoned.

But if the ground on which an atonement was necessary has been correctly stated, it is equally manifest that there was no necessity for making a representation of the state of sinners in endless misery. Indeed, if such a representation could have been made, it would not have removed one of the obstacles which stood in the way of the salvation of sinners. Such a representation could have made no manifestation of God's opposition to sin, or his regard to the general good. If the object of the sufferings of Christ were merely to make a representation of what sinners deserve, which must be true if his sufferings were the punishment due to sinners, or merely a substitute for that punishment, it is inconceivable how God can, on account of those sufferings, "be just, and the justifier of him who believeth in Jesus." For if the sufferings of Christ show that sinners deserve everlasting punishment, which, on this scheme, they were designed to show, this surely cannot be a sufficient reason why they should be saved from everlasting punishment, and raised to endless glory and felicity.

Should it be said that the sufferings of Christ, as a substitute for the punishment of sinners, were designed to answer the same purposes which would have been answered by the sufferings of sinners, if they had been able to suffer, and actually had suffered the full punishment which their sins deserved, it may be replied that the only purpose which would have been answered by the sufferings of sinners, if they had been able to suffer, and had actually suffered the full punishment which their sins deserve, would have been to remove their ill desert and restore their characters. It is true, that if sinners had suffered the punishment due, according to the supposition, the divine law would have been supported, the character of God displayed, and the good of the universe secured; but these important objects would not have been accomplished by the sufferings of sinners. It would have been the execution of the penalty which would have secured these. Suffering the punishment would, in part, have constituted the character of those who suffered; while it would be the execution which supported the law and displayed the character of God. Hence, it is evident, that the sufferings of Christ are to be viewed as

a substitute for the execution of the penalty of the law, and their efficacy as consisting in answering the same valuable purposes which the execution of the penalty of the law would have answered. The sufferings of Christ, viewed in this light, constitute an ample atonement. "By atonement is here meant that which magnifies the broken law of God, and does it the same honor which would have been done by the execution of its penalty whenever it be incurred.

Some have supposed that the sufferings of Christ must have been the very punishment due to sinners, because the apostle speaks of his death as a "curse." "Christ hath redeemed: us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us." It is argued that this curse is the curse of the law, which must be the punishment due to sinners.

To this it may be answered, that it does not appear that the curse of the law in this passage means the punishment due to sinners. It may, as probably, mean the penalty of the law. This, and the actual suffering of transgressors who have incurred it, are different things. If the sufferings of Christ may be considered as a substitute for the execution of the penalty of the law, the apostle's meaning will not appear to be very obscure, though we should not consider Christ's being made a curse as expressive of his suffering the very punishment which sinners deserve. It should be remembered, that it is not uncommon to meet with passages in the sacred writings which were never designed to be understood in a sense strictly literal. This, too, is obviously the case with the passage now under consideration, even if we should allow that the curse which Christ was made was the very punishment due to sinners; for, surely, no one will suppose that the apostle meant to assert, that Christ was made punishment. The word curse, when used in Scripture in relation to God's law, properly signifies the just sentence of the law, condemning to everlasting death. But no one would understand the apostle to mean, that Christ redeemed us from such a sentence, by being made such a sentence himself. This passage, therefore, must be understood as in some degree figurative; as are many other passages which relate to Christ. He is made to his people "wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption." "By his stripes we are healed." "He is the end of the law for righteousness," &c.

It may not be improper to observe further, that there is something exceedingly unnatural, as well as unscriptural, in the idea that the

sufferings of the Saviour were, in any strict sense, a punishment. For a punishment, strictly speaking, always implies guilt; or ill-desert. At least those by whom it is inflicted, would have it understood that the sufferer is deserving of evil. Where there is no guilt, punishment cannot be properly inflicted. Nor were the sufferings which were inflicted on Christ the same as those to which sinners are doomed, as a just punishment for their sins. It is true, the infinite dignity of his person, and the greatness of the pain he endured, are sufficient to render his sufferings an infinite evil. Yet this infinite evil was not precisely the same which mankind must have endured, had the penalty of the law been inflicted on them.

Should it even be allowed that, all the evil which Christ: suffered was implied in the punishment to which sinners were liable, still, this would not prove that his sufferings were that punishment. But even this may be doubted. It is plain, indeed, that his bodily pain might have been implied in the death with which sinners were threatened; but that his mental sufferings could be implied in that threatening is not equally evident. It is probable that his mental sufferings consisted principally in the effect which a view of God's anger against sinners would necessarily produce in his benevolent heart. "The reason why the mind is affected in the view of objects, is not, originally, their relation to a private, separate interest; but their relation to an interest, to which the affections are united, be it either public or private. Therefore, in proportion to the concern which the man Jesus Christ felt for the salvation of his people, would his mind be affected, in view of that dreadful wrath there was against them. This is not only conceivable, but is a supposition altogether natural. Therefore, that the divine anger, which was exhibited to the view of Christ, was not against him personally, but against the church, is a consideration which gives us no reason to suppose that it might not affect him with very deep distress. Christ had no degree of selfishness. His and his church's interest were one. Therefore, his goodwill to the church would occasion the divine displeasure to be as sensibly felt, as if it had been against him; at least as far as he perceived it, and had a view of it communicated to him."

If we suppose that, as our Lord approached his death, the Father made to him more clear and full manifestations of his anger against sinners, for whom his love was so strong, that he was about to lay down his life for them, this may account for that excessive sorrow and amazement which

so overwhelmed him in the garden, and again on the cross. But this is a kind of distress which, it is presumed, no one will suppose constitutes any part of the punishment of the damned. In every view which can be taken of the subject, therefore, it appears manifestly incorrect to say, that the sufferings of Christ were the penalty of the law; or that he, in his death, suffered in the room and stead of sinners, the very punishment which they deserved.

It is said that the wife of Benevolus was guilty of a crime, by which, according to the law of the state she exposed herself to a punishment which she could not endure and survive. Benevolus approved of the law, and believed that if it were disregarded, and the penalty not inflicted, the consequences to the state would be dreadful. Therefore, though he loved his wife tenderly yet such was his regard for the good of the community, that he chose that she should be punished, rather than that the authority of the law should be destroyed, and that confusion introduced into the state which he believed would be the consequence.

But desiring that his wife might be spared, if it could be done in any way consistent with the public good, and supposing that his own constitution was sufficiently firm to enable him endure the evil with which she was threatened, and that his enduring it would support the authority of the law, as effectually as would the execution of its penalty on her, he offered to: take the evil upon himself. His offer was accepted, and he actually suffered.

On the foregoing statement it may be proper to remark, that the atonement which Benevolus is supposed to make for his wife, was not satisfactory, merely on account of his suffering precisely the same evil with which his wife was threatened. If he had suffered any other evil sufficiently great, it would have answered the desired purpose just as well. On this principle, fines are sometimes substituted for corporal punishments. It makes no difference whether the evil consist in one thing or another, provided it is great enough to convince the subjects of the kingdom that transgression must be followed by evil consequences, proportioned to the guilt incurred. Any thing which is calculate to produce this conviction, as fully and as clearly as would the literal execution of the penalty of the law, must constitute a satisfactory atonement; because, in this case, the authority of the law is not weakened, nor is any encouragement given to transgression. The atonement which Zaleucus

made for his son was equally satisfactory with that of Benevolus, although the evil to which he submitted was not the very evil with which his son was threatened.

It may also be observed, that the sufferings of Benevolus did not answer all the purposes which would have been answered by the punishment of his wife. If she had suffered the punishment which she deserved, this punishment would so far have constituted her character, as to have removed her ill desert, and secured her from further sufferings, on amount of her offence, on principles of justice. In this case there could have been no grace in forbearing to inflict further punishment. But in the case which has been supposed, nothing of this appears. The sufferings of the husband constituted no part of her character, and removed no part of her ill desert. Nor was it necessary, nor even possible, that they should. If the same ends could be answered by his sufferings which would have been answered by the execution of the penalty of the law, this was sufficient. If she had herself endured the deserved punishment, two objects would have been accomplished. One would have been accomplished by the execution of the penalty; the other, by enduring deserved punishment. The object accomplished by the execution of the penalty of the law would have been, the support of the authority of the law and the government. The object accomplished by enduring the deserved punishment would have been the removal of personal ill desert. One would have displayed the character of him who administered the government; the other would have gone to constitute the character of the person, from whom ill desert would have been removed, by suffering the deserved punishment. One would have been consistent with the free pardon of the criminal; the other, having done away ill desert, would have entitled to an exemption from further sufferings, on principles of justice.

On the whole, it is evident, that the sufferings of Benevolus were designed to support the authority of the law and government, rather than to remove the personal ill desert of his wife; that they were a substitute for the former, rather than the latter; and that the wife of Benevolus was as much indebted to grace for her release from punishment, as she could have been had she been released from punishment without the substitution of her husband's sufferings. So, if the atonement of Christ was necessary to answer the same purposes which the execution of the penalty of the law would have answered, namely, to exhibit the

disposition of the divine mind; to show God's regard for his law, his determination to maintain its authority, his love of righteousness and hatred of sin; it must plainly follow, that the sufferings of Christ were designed as a substitute for the execution of the penalty of the law. If this view of the subject be correct, it must be exceedingly evident, that there was not that interchange of persons, with respect to rewards and punishments, between Christ and sinners, which some have supposed.

CHAPTER VII: AN INQUIRY CONCERNING IMPUTATION.

IT has been the opinion of many, that in order for guilty man to be justified through Christ, it is necessary that his righteousness should be imputed to them, so as to be a ground on which they may be considered righteous in law. For it is added, there must be a perfect righteousness somewhere, to lay a foundation for justification; and hence, since mankind have no perfect righteousness of their own, the righteousness of Christ must be imputed to them. What is really intended by these things it is not easy to ascertain. If the sentiment be, that Christ's righteousness is transferred to the believer so as to become his righteousness, it is believed to be utterly, without foundation, Righteousness, as well as sin, must be entirely a personal thing, in such a sense that it cannot be transferred. The righteousness of Christ, like that of every other holy being, consists entirely in his actions, feelings, and attributes. Essentially it consists in his love to God and other beings, and is as unalienably his, as is any attribute of his nature. Is it even possible that the actions which Christ performed while here on earth, in which his righteousness in part consists, should be so transferred from him to believers as to become actions which they have performed? Could the righteous words which he spake be transferred from him to saints, so as to become the righteous words which they have spoken? The bare mention of the idea must be sufficient to evince that in the very, nature of the thing it must be impossible. Christ's exercises of holy love could no more taken from him and transferred to believers, so as to become their exercises of holy love, than his miraculous acts of walking upon the water, or raising the dead, could be transferred: in the same way; and both, for aught we can perceive, must be at least as remote from all possibility as the papal notion of transubstantiation.

If by Christ's righteousness being imputed to believers for their justification, be not meant that his righteousness is so transferred to them as to become their righteousness; but that God views and represents them as righteous, by virtue of the righteousness of Christ; then the inquiry which arises is, whether God do not view and represent things precisely as they are? Can he view things any otherwise than as they are in reality? If he can, what evidence have we that he does not view the

bread and wine used in the sacramental supper as being the real body and blood of Christ? And if he ever represent any thing different from what it really is, what ground can there be for confidence in his representations? But if God do both view and represent things as they really are, he surely cannot view and represent sinners as being perfectly righteous; because this certainly is not their character. God does, indeed, view and represent Jesus Christ as being perfectly righteous; and the reason is, because he is perfectly righteous. But saints are not perfectly righteous. On the contrary, they have been totally sinful; and though now pardoned and justified, in point of strict justice, they still deserve eternal punishment, and God will for ever view and represent them in this light. The Scriptures nowhere teach either that God does now, or that he will in the day of judgment, view and represent believers as possessing in any sense a perfect righteousness. It is true, they lead us to believe that saints will finally be freed from all sin-, but they equally lead us to believe that even then it will appear that they, as well as the finally impenitent, have sinned and come short of the glory of God, and in Point of merit really deserve damnation. How else will every mouth be stopped, and all the world become guilty before God? But if God will cause all this to appear, how can he with any propriety be said to view and represent saints as being perfectly innocent or righteous, on account of the righteousness of another? Besides, if God were to view and represent guilty beings as righteous, only because some other being is righteous, he would certainly view and represent things very differently from what they really are, to suppose which would be blasphemous.

But if by the imputation of Christ's righteousness to saints for their justification, is not intended either that his righteousness is transferred to them and becomes their righteousness, or that God views and represents them to be righteous on Christ's account, the inquiry must still remain, What does this language mean? Some have said that saints receive Christ's righteousness by faith, for their justification. But this assertion is really no more intelligible than the other. For it is difficult to see how saints can receive that righteousness of Christ which consisted in his own personal actions, affections, and properties.

We read in the Scriptures of different kinds of faith; as of a faith to remove mountains; a faith to be healed; faith which Paul preached; and faith in the blood of Christ. Now why cannot one of these kinds of faith

receive the righteousness of Christ, as well as another? How can faith in the blood of Christ, any more than a faith to remove mountains, receive Christ's righteousness? Each of these kinds of faith, except that which Paul preached, is a mere exercise of the creature; and how can one exercise of a creature receive Christ's righteousness, any more than another? Faith in the blood of Christ, and repentance for sin, are both exercises of the same heart? The difference between these exercises consists merely in their object. Faith is an exercise of a good heart, in view of the sufferings of Christ as an atonement for sin. Repentance is an exercise of the same heart, in view of sin as being against an holy God. How, then, can faith receive the righteousness of Christ, any more than repentance? Can a believer's act of faith receive Christ's act of faith? Does the believer's exercise of faith receive Christ's exercise of love? Or is it the believer's love which receives that? How can the believer's faith receive Christ's love, any more than the believer's love may receive Christ's faith? Or how can the believer's faith receive Christ's love, any more than it can receive his walking on the sea?

It is confidently believed that neither Scripture nor reason affords any more warrant for the opinion that it is even possible for the believer's faith to receive Christ's faith, or love, than for the opinion that a believer's walking in the highway receives Christ's walking upon the water. If the meaning be, that saints, by faith, make the righteousness of Christ their own, the question still is, How can these things be? How is it possible that the righteousness of one being can become the righteousness of another being? When Christ said to his disciples, "Except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no wise enter into the kingdom of heaven," he certainly did not mean to teach that we must, somehow, obtain the righteousness of some other being.

Whatever the meaning of the language under consideration may be, if, indeed, it have any proper meaning, it must be liable, furthermore, to this capital objection, that, contrary to the whole tenor of the gospel, it supposes that the salvation of sinners is altogether upon the principles of law and justice. For if Christ has suffered the full penalty of the law, as a legal substitute for any part of mankind, then justice, in every sense, is satisfied; it has received its full demand; and, therefore, can require no further sufferings. Indeed, its demands must now be heard on the other

hand; it must demand their exemption from all punishment, because the whole, which was ever due to them, has been inflicted on Christ, their legal substitute. It is very easy to see that, on this ground, no forgiveness or grace could be exercised in setting men free from punishment. This would only be treating them justly.

So if Christ, as a substitute for believers, has obeyed the law, so that God justifies them, and makes them happy, out of respect to the righteousness of Christ, considered as theirs, then saints, are really justified by works in a law sense; not, indeed, by their own works, but by the works of their legal substitute. If saints are justified by the obedience of their substitute, it is the same thing as if they were justified by their own obedience, so far as it respects their being justified by works. It is evidently all on the principles of law and justice; and there is no grace in the matter. If a man engage to perform a certain work, for a reward which is proposed, it makes no difference whether he do the work himself, or procure another to do it for him. Let the work be done, according to agreement, and he is entitled to his reward. So if Christ has done for believers the work which the law required them to do, God is now bound, on the principles of strict justice, to bestow the promised reward, eternal life. There is no grace, but stern, unbending justice here.

Should it be said that saints are still unworthy, in themselves, and so do not deserve happiness, it may be answered, that they are not unworthy, in the sense in which they are viewed, as possessing Christ's perfect righteousness. So far from it, that in this sense they merit eternal happiness, by their substituted perfect righteousness. However guilty they may be, in themselves, still, in the sense in which they are considered as having a perfect righteousness they must be made happy, according to strict justice. Besides, on this scheme, they have suffered, in their substitute, All they deserve to suffer; and, therefore, all their sin is, in a law sense, as though it had never been. And, since all their ill desert has been done away, and they now have a perfect righteousness in their substitute, they can make a legal demand of happiness. In the day of judgment they may say, "Jesus Christ has been accepted as our substitute; he has suffered for us the full demand of the law; and we have a perfect righteousness in him; we, therefore, demand deliverance from the curse, and eternal happiness on the ground of law."

Should it be said that it was grace in Jesus Christ to take the place of the

transgressor, it may be answered, that this removes no difficulty; for, still, after Christ has suffered and obeyed, as a legal substitute, there can be no grace in delivering believers from punishment, and making them happy. This act of God must be as strictly an act of justice, as though there had been no grace in Christ's taking the place of transgressors. Upon this scheme, that Christ has suffered and obeyed as a legal substitute for the elect, there can be seen no forgiveness, grace, nor mercy, in their deliverance from punishment, or in their admission to happiness. All still proceeds on the principle of law and justice, contrary to the decided testimony of the gospel, which certainly is, that the salvation of sinners, from beginning to end, is all of grace. Not of works, not of law; but, entirely, by another dispensation. The law has nothing to do in the affair, otherwise than by teaching men their guilty and miserable situation, and thus leading them to embrace the new and gracious method of salvation made known in the gospel.

And, besides being contrary to Scripture, this scheme is absurd in itself. For, in a law sense, one being cannot suffer or obey for another. The voice of the law is, "The soul that sinneth, it shall die not another for him. Nor does the law require or admit of the obedience of one being in behalf of another; but it requires perfect obedience of every person for himself. "The righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him; and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him.

If the meaning of the language under consideration be, that Christ's righteousness or active obedience procures heaven for believers; that, as his sufferings were necessary to open a consistent way for the p of their guilt, so his obedience was necessary in order to open a way in which they might be consistently, admitted into heaven; it may be answered, that, on this ground, there would be as much propriety in saying that the sufferings of Christ are imputed to believers, as in saying that his righteousness is imputed to them. If the necessity of his righteousness, in order to procure their admission into heaven, renders it proper to say that his righteousness must be imputed to them, must not the same or a similar necessity of his sufferings, in order to procure their pardon, evidently render it equally proper to say, that his sufferings must be imputed to them? But, it is not true that Christ's righteousness has the same, or a similar influence, in opening a consistent way for our admission into heaven, which his sufferings have in opening a consistent

way for our pardon.

If the view which has been given of the necessity of atonement, in order to the pardon of sinners be correct, it appears evident that they may be admitted to heaven, as well as pardoned on account of the sufferings of Christ. The atonement did not consist in removing the ill deserts of sinners; nor was it necessary (had it been possible,) that their ill deserts should be removed, that they might be consistently pardoned. But if they might be consistently pardoned, notwithstanding their ill desert, unquestionably, after they are pardoned, they may be consistently admitted to heaven notwithstanding their want of personal merit. Had atonement been necessary to do away the ill deserts of sinners, and this had actually been effected by the sufferings of Christ, it is allowed that it would have been consistent to suppose that the active obedience of Christ was necessary to furnish them with positive merit. But in this way there could have been no grace in the sinner's pardon, or in his being admitted into heaven. In this case, Christ would literally have paid his debt, and purchased his inheritance of glory.

Another consequence must be, that since Christ has tasted death for every man, every man's debt is paid, and every man's heaven is purchased. So that every man may demand both a discharge from evil, and an inheritance of glory. It is true, probably, that few would be willing to acknowledge these consequences which fairly result from such a scheme; yet they seem to be unavoidable.

Besides, it may be pertinent to inquire, what reason can be assigned why such an interchange of persons between Christ and sinners, as some have supposed, was necessary. What were the obstacles which stood in the way to prevent infinite goodness from bestowing pardon and heaven on those who had none to endure the punishment due to them, or to furnish them with a perfect righteousness?. Abundant reasons have been given why atonement was necessary, in order that the guilty might be pardoned. But none of these reasons apply, in the case before us. None of these reasons rendered it in the least degree necessary, that their ill desert should be removed, or that their blessedness should be purchased. But what other reasons can be assigned which will apply? It is confidently believed that no one can tell. Nor will it be less difficult to show the consistency of such an atonement with grace in the pardon of sinners. And, besides, either partial atonement or universal salvation

must be the result of the scheme.

If, to avoid these consequences, it should be said, that, although atonement was not necessary to remove personal ill desert in order that sinners might be consistently pardoned, it does not hence follow that there is no necessity of an imputation of Christ's personal righteousness, in order that the believer may be consistently admitted to heaven; it may be replied, that this is not the argument. If want of personal merit, or perfect righteousness is any barrier against a sinner's gracious admission to heaven, let the objector make it appear; and, when he has done this, let him have the goodness to show, that personal ill desert does not present a barrier against his pardon, which is equally insuperable. If a sinner, notwithstanding his personal demerit, may be graciously pardoned, it is believed it cannot be shown why a believer, notwithstanding his want of a perfect righteousness, may not be graciously admitted to heaven. "God commendeth his love towards us in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more, then, being now justified by his blood we shall be saved from wrath through him."

Much dependence is placed on certain passages of Scripture, which speak of Christ as being "our righteousness," for the support of the scheme in question. Christ is called "the Lord our righteousness." But how does it appear that, therefore, his righteousness is imputed to us? Why would it not be just as natural to infer, from his being called "our life," that his life is imputed to us? And, also, when we read that he is made of God unto us wisdom, sanctification, and redemption, that his wisdom must be imputed to us, &c.

One passage which is much relied on to prove that Christ's righteousness is imputed to the believer, is, Phil. 3:9. "And be found in him; not having on mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ; the righteousness which is of God, by faith." This passage is thus paraphrased by Dr. Doddridge: "I am happy enough if I may be found in him, vitally united to him by a true faith and love, and so taken under his protection and favor; not having on mine own righteousness, which [is] of the law; such righteousness as only consists in observing the precepts and expiations of the Jewish religion which I was once so solicitous to establish; nor any confidence in any legal righteousness whatever, as my plea before God; but that I may be interested in that which [is] by the faith of Christ, the righteousness which

is of God through faith; that which he has appointed we should obtain and secure, by believing in his Son, &c. Rom. 3:22, is also quoted, with much confidence: "Even the righteousness of God, which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all, and upon all them that believe; for there is no difference;" which Dr. Doddridge paraphrases thus: Even the righteousness of God, which he hath appointed us to seek, by the exercise of a, living faith in the power and grace of his Son Jesus Christ; to whom he commands us to commit our souls, with all humble and obedient regard.

This way of obtaining righteousness and life is now, I say, made manifest to all, and like a pure, complete, and glorious robe, is put upon all them that believe; for there is, in this respect, no difference at all between one believer and another." All similar passages may be explained in a similar manner. While it is nowhere explicitly asserted that the righteousness of Christ must be, or ever is imputed to believers, or that his active obedience procures heaven for them, the Scriptures do plainly teach, that heaven is procured for them by his sufferings and death; or, in other words, that his sufferings and death procure heaven for them, in the same sense in which they procure their pardon. "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish but have everlasting life." John 3:14,15. This passage plainly teaches in, that the very object for which the Son of Man was lifted up [on the cross] was, that believers might have everlasting life. "For Christ, also, hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God." 1 Pet. 3:18. The phrase "bring us to God" in this passage it is presumed, all will agree, implies that divine intercourse to which saints, in heaven, are admitted.

But, surely, this passage cannot be fairly explained without admitting that the purpose for which Christ suffered was, that he might open a consistent way, by his sufferings, for believers to be admitted to this intercourse. Indeed, if the reasons which have been already stated, showing why an atonement was necessary to open, a way for the pardon of sinners are correct, it must appear evident that no obstacles stood in the way of the admission of sinners to heaven, which did not stand in the way of their being pardoned; and, on the other hand, that whatever opposed their pardon, equally opposed their admission to heaven. It must follow that the same, and only the same atonement which was necessary

to render their being pardoned consistent, was necessary to render their admission to heaven consistent.

Hence we may safely conclude, that if it became God to "set forth Christ to be a propitiation, through faith in his blood, that he might be just, and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus;" it equally "became him, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the Captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings." Heb. 2:10. Indeed the Scriptures explicitly authorize the belief that "for this cause he was the Mediator of the new testament, that, by means of death, they which are called, might receive the promise of an eternal inheritance." Heb. 9:15. Hence we are taught to anticipate the very song which will be sung by all the redeemed of the Lord when they arrive at heaven, and surround the throne of the Lamb with the four living creatures, and the four-and-twenty elders, "Thou art worthy, for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood." Rev. 5:9.

CHAPTER VIII: REASONS WHY FAITH IN THE BLOOD OF CHRIST IS NECESSARY, IN ORDER THAT SINNERS MAY BE JUSTIFIED.

THE Scriptures evidently teach, that faith in the blood of Christ is necessary in order that sinners may be justified through him. Christ is "set forth to be a propitiation, through faith in his blood." He suffered, that God "might be just, and the justifier of him that believeth." Notwithstanding the all-sufficient atonement he has made, "he that believeth not shall be damned." This, too, is perfectly consistent. For it is really as necessary that sinners should have. faith in the blood of Christ, in order that God may be just in justifying them, as it was that Christ should suffer. Indeed, the same reasons which rendered the sufferings of Christ necessary, rendered it equally necessary that sinners should believe; because the same obstacles which stood in the way of the pardon of sinners without an atonement, still stand in the way of the pardon of those who have not faith. That this may be clearly perceived, however, it will be necessary to keep in mind the necessity and nature of the atonement

If the atonement consisted in the literal payment of a debt, it is acknowledged the case would be different. If sinners had, literally, owed divine justice an infinite debt, and Christ had stepped into their place and paid it by his sufferings and death, it is very evident, that faith in his blood would not be necessary to their justification. If the debt of sinners has been paid, it cannot be again demanded whether they have faith or not. If one person owe another, and a third person pay the debt, and procure a discharge, it surely cannot be necessary that the person discharged should have knowledge of the transaction, in order to his being free from his creditor. Or, if he be informed that his debt is paid, it can make no difference, with respect to the demands of his creditor, whether he believe the information or not. His not, believing, surely, cannot prevent its being discharged. Just so, if the atonement of Christ consisted literally in paying the debt of sinners, it can make no difference with respect to their discharge, whether they have any knowledge of, or belief in, what has been done or, not. Whether they believe, or disbelieve, the debt must be discharged.

But the truth is, the atonement of Christ is not the literal payment of a debt. He has not satisfied the demands of the law in this sense. The law as much demands the punishment of sinners, and as loudly curses every one who continueth not in all things written in it, until he obtains forgiveness, as it would have done if Christ had never died. All who have ever offended, even in one point, are as much guilty of transgressing the whole law, and actually owe as much to divine justice, until it is freely forgiven, as they would if Christ had not tasted death for them. Christ is not the end of the law in such a sense as to have annulled its claims. He did not come to destroy the law; but to fulfil. The law is not made void, through faith; but it is established. The great design of the atonement was not to pay the debt of sinners; but to open a way in which they might consistently be forgiven. Instead of paying a debt, therefore, it consisted in making as full a manifestation of God's respect for his law, and determination, to support it; of his abhorrence of sin, and his love of holiness; and of his determination to promote and secure the highest interest of his kingdom; as could have been made by a literal execution of the penalty of his law on transgressors; that so "he might be just, and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus."

If this view which has been given of the atonement and of the grounds on which it was necessary be correct, it will be easy to perceive that there is now the same necessity that sinners should have faith in the blood of Christ, which there was that Christ should be set forth as a propitiation, in order that God may be just in justifying them. Faith in the blood of Christ may be defined as implying a cordial reception of the sufferings of Christ, or a cordial satisfaction in them, as a necessary, all-sufficient, and infinitely glorious atonement for sin. The necessity of such a faith may appear, from the same considerations which have been urged in showing the necessity of atonement.

1. God could not be just to his law, if he should pardon sinners who have no faith.

As there would have been great impropriety in God's pardoning sinners, without manifesting at the same time his regard for his law, so it must be evidently improper, that any should be justified, unless they respect the same law. Indeed, the same respect for his law which rendered it necessary that God should provide an infinite atonement, in order that he might pardon sinners consistently with his infinite perfections, must

entirely prevent his justifying any who remain opposed to his law. For, should he justify any such persons, he would, in this very act, greatly dishonor his law; he would countenance sinners in dishonoring it; he would even justify them in their unreasonable opposition to its demands. Hence, if God does really respect his law, as we have seen, then it is plain he can never justify any in their opposition to this law. But all those who have not faith, in the blood of Christ, are acting still in opposition to the law of God.

As has been observed, faith in the blood of Christ implies cordially receiving and approving of Christ's sufferings as a necessary atonement. But if sin is not an unreasonable and evil thing; if the law, of which sin is a transgression, is not good; then the sufferings of Christ could not be necessary as an atonement. The sufferings of Christ could not be necessary unless it were, in some way, to support the divine law. Faith in the blood of Christ, implying a cordial satisfaction with what Christ has suffered for the support of the divine law, as being indispensably necessary for the pardon of sinners, therefore implies respect for the law itself. While, on the other hand, unbelief, as it is a rejection of the atonement of Christ as being unnecessary and useless, dishonors the law which the atonement was designed to support.

Hence faith is evidently necessary in order to justification. For, if God should justify sinners who are destitute of faith, he would act directly against himself. While he testified that the atonement of Christ was necessary to the pardon of sinners, he would justify those who reject this testimony, and make him a liar. Indeed it is impossible that he should justify any on the ground of the atonement who have not faith; because both the atonement and faith are equally necessary, and for the same reasons. Notwithstanding the atonement, therefore, God cannot be just in justifying sinners, unless they believe in Jesus. He did not set Christ forth as a propitiation to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins in any other way, than through faith in his blood. It was not that he might be just, and the justifier of him who believeth not in Jesus; but "that he might be just, and the justifier of him that believeth."

2. God could not be just to his kingdom if he should justify sinners who have no faith in the blood of Christ.

Since the atonement was necessary that, if sinners were pardoned, the

subjects of God's kingdom might yet be deterred from disobedience, and that the interests of holiness might be promoted, it must be evident that God cannot consistently justify sinners who have not faith; because this would have a tendency to promote unholiness. In this case, God would even justify sinners in their wickedness. Faith in the blood of Christ implies a cordial approbation of what he has done for the salvation of sinners. Any thing short of this must be rebellion against God. Sinners must either approve or disapprove of what Christ has done. If they disapprove of the atonement, they must disapprove of the divine law; and, consequently, of the character of the Lawgiver, which is there delineated. If they have faith, they acquiesce in Christ's work of atonement, and approve of the law and character of God; But if they have not faith, they remain in opposition to God, and to the whole economy of grace. No sinner, therefore, can have any true holiness, unless he has faith in the blood of Christ,

Hence it follows, that if God should justify any sinner who has not faith, instead of promoting, he would destroy the interest of holiness. Instead of punishing sinners who despise and reject Christ, he would justify them. This could have no tendency to deter others from disobedience, but would encourage them in it. Moral beings, perceiving that God was not so opposed to sinners, who opposed and slighted Christ, and thus manifested their disrespect to the law which he died to honor, and their disapprobation of the character of God which he died to display, but that he would justify them, it is impossible that they should either believe him an enemy to transgression, or discover any consistency in his character. They would conclude that Christ was set forth to be a minister of sin; not to condemn sin in the flesh, but to justify those who continue in the practice of this evil and bitter thing. Hence it appears plain,

3. That God could not appear just to his own character, if he should justify sinners who have no faith.

Consistency is one thing which is essential to the perfection of any character. But, it is obvious, that should God justify sinners who are destitute of faith, he would act very inconsistently. He would appear at variance with himself, destroying at one time what he had done at another. By the requirements and threatenings of his law he manifested a regard for holiness and an abhorrence of sin. In giving his beloved a regard for holiness and an abhorrences of sin. In giving his beloved Son

to die on the cross to make an atonement, he manifested the same feelings, and displayed the same glorious character. But should he now justify those who have no faith in the atonement, no acquiescence in it, and no approbation for it, he would counteract and contradict what has thus been manifested in his law, and in the sufferings and death of Christ. In doing this, he would justify those who were opposed to Christ, which would be an implicit acknowledgment that their opposition was right; indeed, it would be taking part with them in their opposition. Hence his character would appear inconsistent and suspicious. Holy beings would be, at a loss what opinion they might form respecting his real feelings. They might fear him; but they would lose their confidence, and would scarcely find it in their hearts to love him. Since, therefore, all who are destitute of faith in the blood of Christ are opposed to him, it is impossible that any such can ever be justified. Faith in the blood of Christ is, therefore, indispensably necessary to justification. Christ is not the end of the law for righteousness to unbelievers, or to them that have not faith; but he is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth."

It may not be impertinent to observe here, moreover, that if God should justify those who have no faith, it could answer no very valuable purpose, even to those who should be thus justified, as it could not avail to secure their happiness. Sinners cannot be made happy without being brought into a state of reconciliation with God, nor can they be reconciled unless they have faith in Christ. Reconciliation to God implies faith in Christ, and faith in Christ implies reconciliation to God. They so include each other, that where one, is wanting the other cannot subsist. Every one who is truly reconciled must be pleased with what God does, so far as it is made known to him. For so far as any one is displeased with what God does, so far certainly he is unreconciled. Hence, if sinners are not pleased with what God has done, in causing an atonement to be made for sin, they are in a state of unreconciliation. They remain at variance, and at enmity with God. But if they are pleased with the atonement of Christ and so reconciled, they have faith in his blood. This is the very thing which is required in order to justification. Faith in the blood of Christ consists very much in being pleased and satisfied with what God has done, in giving his Son to die to make atonement for sin, and in cordially receiving the Son as an all-sufficient Saviour as he is offered in the gospel. But nothing short of this can be called reconciliation to God. Every thing short of this

involves opposition and enmity.

Since, therefore, sinners must be reconciled to God, or they must be miserable; and since reconciliation to God implies faith in the blood of atonement, it is plain that faith in Christ is necessary to the happiness of sinners. Hence it appears that if God should justify sinners who have no faith, he would not only justify opposition to Christ and opposition to himself, but he would do that which would be altogether useless. For, though they were thus justified, sinners could have no peace in their opposition; they could not be happy. They would still be like the troubled sea when it cannot rest. But, certainly, the very idea of justifying one who is opposed to God, is highly repugnant to reason as well as to Scripture. There is, therefore, no possible way in which sinners can be justified, excepting through Nth in the blood of Jesus Christ. "Therefore, being justified by faith, we have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ; whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation, through faith in his blood, that he might be just, and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus."

CONCLUSION

ON reviewing the foregoing pages, it appears that the opinion which some have entertained that the atonement of Christ was necessary, for the purpose of exhibiting evidence to the minds of intelligent beings that the divine law is just and reasonable, must be entirely erroneous. The truth is, no such evidence was wanting. Intelligent beings well understood that the law was holy, and just, and good. But if it had been otherwise, if such evidence had really been wanting, it would be impossible to find it either in the obedience or sufferings of Christ. If, previously to the atonement of Christ, there had been any ground of reasonable doubt concerning the justice of the divine law, the nature of the case would have required evidence of a different kind from any thing which results from the life or death of Christ to have removed it. The obedience of Christ could not have answered the purpose. For if the justice of a law be suspected, the justice of him who gave the law must be equally called in question; and, consequently, no conduct of his, founded on this suspicious law, can be considered as free from the same suspicion.

If a king should make a bad law, doubtless the same motives which

induced him to make it might also induce him to obey it. His obedience, therefore, could do nothing towards removing the grounds of suspicion. Neither could the sufferings of Christ have answered any such purpose. It has been shown, indeed, that the sufferings of Christ answer the same purposes which the execution of the penalty of the law would have answered. But still they do not prove the law to be just; for this would not have been proved by the execution of the penalty. Should a king give an unjust law and govern his subjects by it, rigorously executing its penalty on every transgressor, it must be obvious, surely, that this could not prove the law to be just. Nor would the mere execution of the penalty of a good law afford any better evidence of its goodness.

But if the ease were otherwise, and it could be shown that the obedience or the sufferings of Christ did actually prove that the divine law is just, still, how could this make the necessary atonement? The atonement was necessary, not that God might be just in condemning transgressors, but that he might be just in justifying and saving them, if they would believe in Jesus. But how could proving the law to be just answer this purpose? In other words, how could proving the law to be just afford any reason for remitting its penalty, and pardoning the transgressor? If it could do it in any way, must it not follow that the more clearly it appears that a law is just, the more easily may its penalty be dispensed with; and, on the other hand, that the more doubtful it is whether a law is just, the more indispensably necessary it must be that its penalty should be rigorously executed?

Equally erroneous is the opinion that the atonement was necessary to show that the divine law may be obeyed by man. What Christ has done and suffered does not prove this. It is true, Christ obeyed the law; but how this can possibly afford any evidence that man is capable of obeying it, does not appear. For Christ was not a mere man. In his glorious person the divine and human natures are united. Hence his obedience no more proves that a mere man is capable of yielding a perfect obedience, than his walking on the sea, raising the dead, and performing other wonderful works is evidence that any mere man can do the same things. But were it otherwise, and the obedience of Christ did prove that man has power to obey as perfectly as he obeyed, still, it would be difficult to see how this would render it consistent that sinners should be pardoned. Are they less criminal because the law which they have disobeyed is one

which they had full power to obey? If they had been incapable of obeying the divine law, would this have rendered it more necessary to punish their disobedience? If God had pardoned sinners on the ground that the law they had violated was shown to be just, and capable of being obeyed by man, how would this support the authority of that just and reasonable law? Would this have any tendency to deter others from disobedience? Would it manifest clearly God's love of righteousness and hatred of iniquity? Would any consistency of conduct appear in giving such a law, and then neglecting to execute its penalty? Would its being shown to be a good law be a sufficient reason why its penalty should not be executed? It is believed no one would choose to answer these questions in the affirmative.

It appears, also, that Christ's death was not a ground of redemption, merely as being a means of sanctification. It is evident, indeed, that Christ's sufferings and death, when viewed aright, must be a powerful means of promoting those dispositions of mind which are necessary to eternal life; and hence some have been led to suppose that the virtue and efficacy of Christ's death should not be viewed in any other light. Since none can be saved unless they are sanctified by his blood, or death, it has been concluded that the only reason why God forgives sins and bestows other blessings on account of his death is, because this is a proper means of cleansing from sin. This scheme supposes that atonement was necessary for no other purpose than to furnish sinners with those personal qualifications without which they cannot receive pardon.

To explain the scheme it has been said that God "wants neither our information nor importunity to engage his kind regards; but he requires us to pray to him for his blessing and favors, in order to improve our minds in pious and virtuous dispositions. He wants not our assistance for the relief of the indigent and distressed; but he has made it our duty to succor them, for the exercise of our benevolence. He wants no sacrifice to excite or assist his mercy; but we may want it to increase and strengthen our virtue." And "as our prayers are a reason of God's conferring blessing upon us, because our prayers are means of producing pious dispositions in our minds; so the blood of Christ makes atonement for sin, or is a reason of God's forgiving our sins, because the blood of Christ is a means of cleansing us from sin." This scheme is unsatisfactory for several

reasons.

1. According to this scheme the death of Christ is an atonement only so far as it is a mean of cleansing from sin; and its virtue consists only in being such a mean; from whence it would seem evidently to follow, that any thing else, which is a mean of sanctifying and cleansing from sin, must, at least, so far as it actually produces this effect, constitute as satisfactory an atonement as has been made by the death of Christ. Prayers, alms, and sufferings for Christ's sake, as well as the blood of Christ, are means of promoting pious dispositions in the mind, sanctifying the affections, and cleansing from sin. The institutions of the gospel are all means of sanctification. The preaching of the gospel is particularly designed as such a mean; the word of God generally is so designed; Christ, prayed for the elect, "Father, sanctify them through thy truth, thy word is truth;" and the Holy Spirit is designated to the particular work of sanctification. If, then, the blood of Christ makes atonement, only because it is a mean of cleansing from sin, it must be difficult to see why all these other things do not answer the same purpose; yet neither of them is ever said to make atonement.

2. The scheme in question appears to suppose that the sanctification and cleansing of sinners was all that was necessary to render it consistent for God to grant them pardon and salvation. But certainly it must require some very explicit declaration of Scripture to authorize a belief that had this been all that was necessary, a God of infinite wisdom could not devise any means of sanctifying and cleansing them, which would have been less expensive than the sufferings and death of his beloved Son; or that if such means could be devised, a God of infinite benevolence would not have chosen them. The Scriptures, however, give no intimation of any such thing.

3. However this scheme may be considered as combining the glory of God with the good of his creatures, it seems evidently to make the glory of God but a secondary object; but this appears to be inconsistent with the Scriptures, which plainly represent God as seeking his own glory supremely in all he does.

4. Although, in this scheme, the death of Christ is named as making atonement; yet it represents the atonement as consisting rather in a mere circumstance attending the death of Christ, namely, its tendency to

promote sanctification. Indeed, it may be doubted whether even this circumstance would be the very thing; for the value of this must depend on the effect produced in cleansing from sin. So that, after all, the sanctification of the sinner would, in fact, be the atonement. This appears to be the precise reason why God exercises pardon. Hence it is not seen why a sinner, who might attain to as high a degree of sanctification in some other way, would not be as proper a subject of pardon, nor why God would not be as readily disposed to pardon him. But this would be yielding to those who have denied atonement all that they have contended for; as it would be granting that atonement was not necessary that God might be just in pardoning and saving sinners; and that he could not consistently with infinite benevolence, withhold pardon from any penitent. It would, however, be very inconsistent with the Scriptures, which declare that Christ was set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, that God might be just and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus; and which plainly intimate, that without shedding of the Saviour's blood, there can be no remission.

Again; from the view which has been taken of the necessity and nature of the atonement, we may learn in what sense the sufferings of Christ may be considered as pleasing to God. It has been said, "Mere pain cannot be agreeable to a God of infinite goodness." From whence it has been inferred, that the sufferings of Christ were of no avail, any further than as they exhibited evidence of his disposition to obey. "The bare distress and pain of the Saviour, in themselves simply considered, had no virtue in them and were of no worth; but the disposition of mind with which he endured those extreme agonies and pains, the temper expressed under them were of infinite worth."

The correctness of this opinion may, be reasonably doubted, It is admitted, however, that if by the sufferings of Christ, considered in themselves simply, be meant his sufferings abstracted from his obedience; And not only so, but abstracted also from all consequences to the universe as it, respects supporting the divine law and government, and displaying the divine, character and glory; in short, so abstracted from every thing in the universe, as to do no good in any sense, it must indeed follow that they are of no worth.

But it may be doubted, also, whether the disposition manifested by such sufferings in the same sense abstracted from every thing, would really be

of any more worth. Indeed, if the sufferings of Christ be considered in any sense which would render them useless, it is not seen how a disposition to endure them can be of any worth. What wisdom or virtue can appear in a disposition to endure useless or worthless sufferings? If the sufferings of Christ were of no worth except as a medium through which Christ displayed the strength of his disposition to obey, it will follow that the atonement consists in the strength of his disposition to obey. It would hence follow, that whatever would answer to display the strength of Christ's disposition to obey as fully as his sufferings did, would answer the same purposes in respect to the atonement. If, then, it be true that "without shedding of blood there is no remission" of sins, it must follow that there was no possible way in which an infinite God could display the strength of Christ's disposition to obey, so fully as by his sufferings and death. A conclusion which necessarily results from this is, that since the display of Christ's disposition to obey was of infinite worth, his sufferings must be of equal worth, because they constituted the only possible medium through which this disposition could be displayed.

From what we have seen of the necessity and nature of atonement, it is evident that notwithstanding the disposition of Christ to obey was of infinite worth, it did not, however, constitute any part of the atonement. As has been shown, it did not answer any of those purposes for which atonement was necessary. To answer these purposes, the sufferings of Christ were indispensably necessary. If, then, there was any worth in the atonement, the same worth is found in the mere sufferings of Christ, because in these sufferings is the atonement found; and if there were any thing pleasing to God in the atonement, then were the sufferings of Christ pleasing to him for the same reason.

It is an unquestionable truth, that God is, in some sense, pleased with whatever answers a valuable purpose. Things may answer valuable purposes, and be objects of choice on account of those purposes; and in connection with those purposes may be viewed as pleasing, all things considered, though they are in their own nature displeasing, and would, if they did not answer those purposes, be highly disgusting. This is the case with the misery of the damned. Undoubtedly that would be highly displeasing to infinite benevolence, if it did not, answer a valuable purpose. But as far as that misery is necessary to support the authority of the divine law and the honor of the divine government, it is

unquestionably, on the whole, pleasing to God; nor is it seen why the sufferings of Christ, if they be supposed to answer the same purposes, may not be, in the same sense, pleasing.

The sufferings of Christ were designed as a substitute, not for the punishment of sinners, but for the execution of the penalty of the law. They answer the same purposes which would have been answered by the execution of that penalty in case there had been no atonement. But, if it were pleasing to God to annex a penalty to his law, and if he be a consistent being, it is not seen why it may not be pleasing to have that penalty executed upon transgressors. But, if the execution of that penalty might be pleasing, why might not any thing else, which would answer the same valuable purposes, be equally pleasing?

The sufferings of Christ were designed to answer these purposes, and it has been shown that they do answer them fully. Hence, it is evident, they are agreeable to God. It is not supposable that they were agreeable in any other sense; nor is it supposable that Christ would have consented to suffer, or that the Father would have consented that he should suffer, if they had not been agreeable in this sense

Hence we may conclude that he suffered nothing more than an infinitely wise God judged necessary, that these important purposes might be fully answered. He suffered nothing in vain. What he began in the manger, he finished on the cross. Nothing more can be intended, by his suffering under Pontius Pilate, than that he then finished the great work. He then completed that course of sufferings which was necessary to answer the great ends of his incarnation.

It may be observed further, that in God's requiring the sufferings of Christ in order to pardon believing sinners, there is nothing arbitrary. He did not require this without sufficient reasons. The honor of his law, the glory of his character, and the interests of his kingdom rendered it necessary. Some have supposed that the constitution of the gospel, which requires full atonement before sinners can be pardoned, represents the Supreme Being as deficient in goodness. But this, surely, must be a great mistake, unless he would have appeared possessed of more goodness if he had executed the penalty of his law on all transgressors, without having mercy on any of them. For, surely, no one, can rationally suppose that God would have appeared as possessing more goodness, if he had

suffered his holy law to fall into contempt, his subjects to transgress with impunity, and the affairs of his kingdom to go to confusion and ruin. Such a procedure, on the part of the divine Being, might, indeed, have rendered the state of incorrigible offenders less deplorable; but it would have been totally inconsistent with the blessedness of holy beings, or the general good of God's universal kingdom.

The doctrine of atonement, therefore, instead of lowering our ideas of God's goodness, greatly exalts them, Indeed this is the doctrine which, above all others, produces this effect. The sufferings of Christ declare God's goodness, as well as his righteousness. Herein "was manifested the love of God."

Some have supposed, that if Christ's sufferings constituted a full atonement for all those for whom he died, he must have endured as much pain as all those for whom he died would have endured, in case they had suffered the full punishment due to them for their sins; and that, if this is the case, there is nothing gained by the substitution, because the evils which the damned would suffer would no more than counterbalance the evils which Christ has suffered, leaving nothing gained in favor of the general good. To this it may be answered, that, even on this ground, much would still be gained. Though it is true that nothing would be gained by avoiding positive evil, yet much would be gained by obtaining positive happiness. For while the two evils exactly balanced the happiness secured by the everlasting redemption of a great multitude which no man can number, would greatly overbalance the sum of happiness which the man Christ Jesus lost during the short period of his sufferings, if this could be considered as loss, on the whole, to himself. But even this is not to be admitted. On the contrary, there was a gain of happiness even to Christ himself, in consequence of his sufferings. Hence we are assured that, "for the joy which was set before him," he "endured the cross, despising the shame." There would, therefore, even on this ground, evidently be a great gain of happiness in the universal system.

But besides, there is no reason to believe that the sufferings of Christ were of an amount, in point of quantity, equal to all which those for whom he died must have endured. It does not appear to have been necessary, considering the innocency and dignity of his character, that the real evil endured by Christ should be so great as the evil of the sufferings of those whom he redeemed must have been. It is, quite sufficient if God's regard

for his law, his opposition to sin, and his love for the general good, be as fully manifested in the sufferings of Christ, as they could have been by the execution of the penalty of the law.

The objection, which has sometimes been made, that the doctrine of atonement represents God as being inexorable, is also groundless. For certainly no one can rationally suppose that God is inexorable, merely because he will not pardon sinners in a way which is totally inconsistent with the honor of his government, the well being of his kingdom, and the glory of his own character. Instead of inexorability, or a deficiency of goodness, every display which God has made of himself in the great work of man's redemption, has been a display of infinite benevolence or love. Even his anger is to be viewed as the result of benevolence.

We read much in the Scriptures of the anger of God. "He is angry with the wicked every day;" and his "anger burn; to the lowest hell." But from these and, other similar passages, we are to understand no more than the eternal opposition of God's benevolence to every thing which opposes his glory, and the highest good of his kingdom. God never indulged any other anger towards any creature, however rebellious and wicked, than what necessarily results from his supreme regard to the glory of his own name, and the highest good of the universe. Nor does the death of Christ render God propitious to sinners in any other sense than this; as it supports the authority of his law and kingdom, it renders the pardon of sinners consistent with the highest good of his kingdom, and with his own glory.

It hence appears, moreover, that the atonement of Christ is, in a strict and proper sense, for all mankind. Christ tasted death for every man; for the non-elect as much as for the elect. Indeed, election has nothing to do with atonement, any more than it has with creation, resurrection from the dead, or the general judgment.

From the necessity and nature of the atonement it is evident that its extent is necessarily universal. It was necessary to remove obstacles which stood in the way of God's pardoning sinners. These obstacles have been considered; and it has been shown that the death of Christ completely removes them. Nothing, therefore, now remains in the way of God's pardoning any sinner whatever of the human family, who will comply with the conditions of the gospel on which pardon is offered.

Neither the compliance of sinners with these terms, nor their non-compliance can, in the least degree, affect the nature or the extent of the atonement. Though the operations of the Holy Spirit are necessary to produce in the hearts of sinners a compliance with these terms, and though these operations are indeed granted to some, while they are withholden from others; yet this is not owing to any thing particular in the nature of the atonement; but it is owing merely to the "purpose of God, according to the election of grace." The Scriptures are remarkably plain on the point now before us. Christ testified that "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." John 3:16. And the apostle John, addressing his Christian brethren, said, "If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. And he is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world." 1 John 2:2.

But though the atonement is, strictly speaking, for all mankind, one as much as another, this does not imply any obligation on the part of God, either to Christ or to sinners, to save any of them. Notwithstanding the atonement, God is at full liberty to save, or not save, just as the general good may require, and his unerring wisdom dictate. If the general good require that any of those for whom Christ died should be left to continue in impenitency, and to perish in their sins, God may thus leave them, in perfect consistency with the nature and design of the atonement.

Whether the general good requires the salvation of a great or a small number, is a question which cannot be decided merely from the nature of the atonement. For if God had designed the salvation of only a small number, the same atonement, for aught we are able to see, would have been necessary to render his conduct consistent in pardoning that few, which has now been made as a ground of offering pardon to the whole. Indeed, if instead of designing the salvation of any, God had only designed to make a free and gracious offer of pardon and salvation to all who would repent and believe, leaving them entirely to their own choice whether to repent and believe, or not, still the same atonement must have been made. For it is plain that God could not consistently offer pardon to sinners on any ground which would not fully justify him in actually granting it, in case they comply with the conditions on which it is offered. But whether they shall be made to comply with these conditions,

by the sanctifying agency of the Holy Spirit, or whether they shall be left to follow the dictates of their own wicked heart, and finally perish in unbelief, or whether there shall be an election of grace among them, and some be called and sanctified, while others are left to their own choice, are questions to be decided on other grounds than atonement. Because the direct object of atonement might be fully accomplished in either case.

This object, as has been shown, was to make a manifestation of the divine character, to declare the righteousness of God. This manifestation God has made. He has shown his hatred of sin and love of holiness. He has shown his regard to his own glory and the best interest of his kingdom. He has, also, manifested a merciful and gracious disposition towards sinners; for he has offered them pardon and eternal life, on condition that they believe in Jesus. These things constitute the object of atonement, and these things will for ever appear, even though no sinner should ever believe, or be saved. It will for ever appear that all was done on the part of God which was necessary, in order that salvation might be freely offered. It will also appear that the free offer of salvation was actually made. God may for ever say, in view of these things, "What could I have done more in my vineyard, that I have not done in it?" And Christ may say to a world of ruined sinners, "Ye would not come unto me that ye might have life." The direct object of atonement, therefore, may be accomplished, though no sinners should be saved.

Notwithstanding all the atonement has done, there still remains an obstacle in the way of salvation. The unbelief of sinners must be removed. They must believe in Jesus, or his atonement can never save them. This is an obstacle which the atonement of Christ does not remove. Neither is there any thing in the nature of atonement which requires that God should remove it. The truth is, mere atonement has nothing to do with its removal. God may remove it or not, as in his view the interest of his kingdom and his own glory may require. If the interest of his kingdom and his own glory require that this obstacle be universally removed, no doubt it will be done.

But we have no evidence that this is the case. We indeed have evidence that the glory of God and the interest of his kingdom require, that this should be done in some instances because we see that it is done. We see that the unbelief of sinners is removed, and they become believers in Jesus. But there are multitudes of others concerning whom this does not

appear. The Scriptures also assure us that some believe, and they assure us, too, that some do not believe "All men have not faith." They describe mankind as constituting two classes, the righteous and the wicked, the believing and the unbelieving. Nor, have we any evidence that these two classes will not continue to exist for ever.

The mere goodness of God certainly does not afford proof that they will not thus continue to exist. For if the existence of sinners, in unbelief and misery, were inconsistent with the goodness of God, they certainly could not thus exist at the present time. We know, however, that they do thus exist. But if their present existence in this state is not inconsistent with divine goodness, then we have no evidence that their future state may not also be sinful and miserable. No doubt God is as able to make all mankind holy and happy in this world as he will be in the world to come. But since he does not make them holy and happy now, notwithstanding his infinite goodness, we have no evidence that he will do it hereafter. Doubtless the reason why God does not make all his creatures holy and happy in the present world is, because his own glory and the general good require otherwise. But if the glory of God and the general good may require that some of God's creatures should be suffered to continue in unbelief and misery in this world, we have no evidence that his glory and the general good may not require that they should be suffered to continue in the same state, in the world to come and during eternity. It is certainly as conceivable that sin and misery should be subservient, or even necessary to the glory of God and the general good in the world to come, as that they are so in this world.

It has been shown that the atonement of Christ answers the same Valuable purposes, at least in relation to all that believe that the complete execution of the penalty of the law would have answered. Nothing more than this was necessary. Nothing less than this was sufficient. If, then, God should give faith to an mankind, he might, out of respect to the atonement, save them all, and at the same time promote his own glory and the good of the universe to the same extent which might have been done by the execution of the law.

But it does not hence follow that God will give faith to all; nor, if he should, that this would promote his glory and the good of his kingdom in the highest degree. It might, indeed, promote these objects in as high a degree as they could have been promoted by the execution of the law;

but the execution of the law could not have promoted them in the highest degree. If it could, then certainly the law would have been executed. For surely no one can suppose that God would have given up Christ to the sufferings of death, if his glory and the interest of his kingdom might have been as well secured by the execution of the law. And yet all that was necessary in order that the sufferings of Christ should constitute a complete atonement was, that they should answer the same valuable purposes respecting the character and government of God, which the execution of the law would have answered.

From whence it must follow, that the execution of the law would not have promoted the glory of God and interest of his kingdom in the highest degree. The sufferings of Christ, however, in order to constitute complete atonement needed only to answer the same purposes which the execution of the law would have answered. Nor have we any evidence that they do, in themselves, answer any other purpose. Neither the execution of the law, nor the atonement of Christ, therefore, in itself, is capable of promoting the highest glory of God, or the best interest of his kingdom. If one could, the other must, for the same reason.

It may be asked, then, why should infinite wisdom choose the method of atonement, rather than the execution of the law? The answer is, the atonement, though it does not of itself promote any object which might not have been promoted by the execution of the law, yet it opens a way in which God can introduce other measures, and accomplish other purposes, which could not have been introduced and accomplished in case the law had been executed; and these other measures and purposes promote his glory and the interest of his kingdom in the highest degree. If the penalty of the law had been executed upon all transgressors, God never could have displayed his justice and mercy to the degree in which they now appear. The atonement, however, opens the way in which God makes this display in the highest perfection.

It is by means of atonement that God has opportunity of displaying his justice in the highest degree. If the penalty of the law had been executed on all transgressors, it is true the justice of God would have appeared in some degree. It would have appeared in as great a degree as that state of things would have required. But it would not have appeared to that degree which the present state of things, under the gospel, requires. For, in order that the glory of divine justice may fully appear, it is necessary

that the evil nature of sin should fully appear. But this never could have appeared to the extent that it now does, if atonement had not been made. Indeed, by the atonement, sinners are brought into a new situation in relation to their God, in which their sins become vastly more aggravated than was possible before. If no atonement had been made, the guilt of sinners would have been incomparably less than it now is. Sin now appears to possess a degree of malignity which never could have appeared if Christ had not come into the world as a Saviour. Hence he declared, "If I had not come and spoken unto them they had not had sin, but now they have no cloak for their sin:" We are not to understand by this declaration of our Saviour that he meant that mankind, strictly speaking, would have been free from sin if he had not come. We are rather to understand that the sins of those who reject him are much greater, in consequence of this rejection; indeed, that they are incomparably greater. If he had not come, the sins of mankind, in comparison with what they now are, would have been as nothing. Yet, in order that the justice of God in the punishment of sinners may appear in the highest degree, it is necessary that the evil nature of sin, in its full extent, should appear.

Antecedently to all consideration of atonement, mankind, as sinners, actually deserved endless punishment. If no Saviour had appeared, and no offer of pardon been made, God would have been just in the infliction of this punishment. No doubt holy angels, who beheld, would have glorified his justice. In this case, however, the depth of human depravity, and the extent of the malignity of sin, could not have appeared. It could not have been seen that sin was so exceedingly malignant, and mankind so exceedingly full of it, as to be ready to reject a Saviour and his salvation when freely offered. If any one, except the Supreme Being himself, had informed angels that mankind had become so exceedingly depraved that even if a Saviour should be provided and salvation should be freely offered, on the most reasonable condition, they would all make light of it, and ungratefully reject the offer, it is probable angels would have doubted whether such wickedness were possible. If mankind, antecedently to the revelation of God's purposes of mercy, had been so informed, probably they, too, would have rejected the idea, and with indignation. All this, however, is true, and must be seen, before the justice of God, in his opposition to sin, can fully appear. But this is what could never have been seen, if the penalty of the law, without atonement,

had been inflicted. Neither could it have been seen, if, when atonement was made, God had given faith to every sinner. Because, in that case, it never could have appeared that the wickedness of mankind was so great, that, if left to their own choice, they, would forever reject a bleeding Saviour. Yet all this must appear, in order that the justice of God, in his opposition to this wickedness, may fully be seen. And if the nature of sin is really so bad that a sinner, left to himself, will continue his opposition to divine, grace, during eternity, then this must be manifested, in order that the justice of God, in punishing such wickedness, may fully appear.

Divine grace, also, must forever appear great, in proportion to the greatness of the wickedness that is pardoned. If, then, God would display the full extent of the riches of his grace, to the view of intelligent beings, he must so order his providence respecting sinners, as to make a clear manifestation of the evil nature of sin, even though it. should be at the expense of leaving some to their own perverse and wicked choice, to be forever living examples of what all sinners must have been, had not divine grace plucked them as brands from the burning.

Thus it is evident that the glory of God may require that the extent of his justice, and the riches of his grace, be forever manifested, by leaving some sinners to their own chosen way, in perpetual unbelief; that he may, as saith the apostle, "show his wrath and make his power known on vessels of wrath fitted to destruction." Nor is it difficult to see how the universe of holy beings may be constantly benefitted by such a display. Certainly, all holy beings must always be interested in every display of the justice and grace of God. Even when the smoke of the torment of the damned ascendeth up forever and ever, inspiration assures us that they cry "Alleluia." Especially will redeemed sinners feel a deep interest in these displays. Our Saviour has plainly taught us, that he to whom much is forgiven, will love much.

If, then, the happiness of saints in heaven will principally consist in loving God, for his rich grace in their salvation, they will certainly be much interested in every display which is made of the depth of wickedness from which they have been delivered, and the awful but just punishment from which they have been saved. But this is what they never could have clearly seen, if divine grace had brought every sinner to embrace the Saviour by faith, as soon as his atonement had been announced. We have no reason to doubt, therefore, that divine justice, notwithstanding

full atonement, does actually require that unbelieving sinners should be finally punished, according to the full demerit of their sins.

By their unbelief, they not only make a much greater manifestation of the evil nature of sin, but they also become much more guilty. Their sins are much more heinous. They really deserve a much greater punishment for rejecting the blood of Christ, than they ever could have deserved if atonement had not been made. If, then, the divine law should take its course on them now, since they have so much enhanced their guilt by neglecting a Saviour, surely its demands must be much more awful than they ever could have been, if no Saviour had bled. Had the original penalty been executed and no salvation their sin, and consequently their desert of punishment, would have been nothing in comparison with what they now are.

What, then, if the sufferings of Christ do answer all the valuable purposes which the execution of the law would have answered, provided no atonement had been made? Does this prove that the execution of the law can answer no valuable purpose now, when, in fact, the guilt of sinners is actually increased to an incomparable degree, by their sinning against the atonement? If a delinquent debtor, at a time when his debt amounted only to a hundred pence, was offered a free discharge of it, provided he would perform a certain condition, would this entitle him to a discharge afterwards when instead of performing the required condition, he had increased his original debt to ten thousand talents? Vain is every hope of eternal life which is not founded in the blood of Christ, and authorized by a living faith!

For, as has been abundantly shown, the same obstacles which stood in the way of God's pardoning sinners without an atonement, stand equally in the way of his pardoning those who do not receive Christ by faith, as their Redeemer and Saviour. God cannot be just and the justifier of any who do not believe in Jesus. If, then, the general good required that none should be pardoned without an atonement, it must still require, notwithstanding the atonement, that none be pardoned except they believe. Withholding pardon from unbelievers, therefore, is so far from being inconsistent with full atonement for all mankind, that it is required by it. Both are on the same ground equally necessary.

Benevolus, in the atonement made for his wife, is supposed to have been

actuated by a regard for the public good; a desire to support the authority of the law, and the interest of the community. If, having suffered, he had communicated a knowledge of the fact to her, and she had wholly disapproved of the substitution, and clearly manifested her determination to continue in the practice of the same wickedness for which she had been condemned, could he be consistently with his regard to the good of the community, the very motive from which he consented to suffer, even desire her pardon? If he should in this case insist on her being pardoned, would he not contradict all the evidence which he had before given of being actuated by a regard to the laws and interests of the community?

If the son of Zaleucus had disapproved of his father's expiation, called it folly, and openly avowed his determination of persisting in his crime, it is evident the good king could not have pardoned him. The atonement he had made was indeed ample, but his son's wicked opposition and contempt presented a new obstacle in the way of his being pardoned. The father had made an exhibition of high respect for his law. If, therefore, the son had remained in open and manifest opposition to this law, the father could not have justified him, without justifying opposition to the very law which himself had suffered to support. If he should now justify his son in this opposition, he would completely counteract all the effect of the atonement which he had made. He would appear very inconsistent destroying, at one time, what he had done, at great expense at another. His subjects would have no evidence that he was determined to support the authority of his law. The immorality which it prohibited would not be prevented. The laws and authority of his government would fall into contempt, and his kingdom would be ruined.

Delusive, indeed, are all the expectations and hopes of the wicked, which are built merely on the universality of the atonement; or, on the ground that Christ has tasted death for every man; while the very nature of the atonement is such, that God cannot be just, and the justifier of any who do not believe in Jesus; while the very blood which was shed "for every man," reiterates, the awful declaration of Christ, He that believeth not shall be damned."

APPENDIX: REMARKS ON THE DOCTRINE OF

UNIVERSAL SALVATION.

HAVING exhibited in the foregoing work a view of atonement which, if correct, sets aside one of the principal arguments on which reliance has been had for the vindication of the doctrine of universal salvation, I propose to add here a few observations on what I apprehend must be the principal remaining arguments in favor of that system.

I certainly shall not err by assuming that the above-mentioned sentiment ought never to be embraced without the most conclusive evidence of its truth. For, certainly, nothing short of the most enlightened assurance that the scheme cannot possibly prove false, can justify any one in risking the salvation of his immortal soul upon its correctness.

But where shall we find this clear evidence, this infallible proof on which a man may safely venture his eternal all?

I know of but two sources from which evidence can be derived, namely: The analogy of nature, and the doctrines of revelation. If the sentiment cannot be proved from one or the other of these, it may safely be affirmed that it is without support.

By the analogy of nature, I mean the correspondence of one thing with another in the natural world. The laws of nature are supposed to be steady and uniform in their operation. Events, which have uniformly occurred in time past, we believe will continue to occur uniformly in time to come. Our evidence in favor of the continued occurrence of these events, is from the analogy of nature. And this is the only principle (except immediate revelation from God), upon which we never calculate any future event with any degree of certainty or even probability. We believe that day and night, seedtime and harvest, summer and winter, will continue to succeed each other. These events have succeeded each other so long and so uniformly as to prove that they occur according to the uniform laws of nature. So long, therefore, as the laws of nature remain what they now are, these events will regularly occur. Our belief in their future occurrence, therefore, is reasonable, because it is according to the analogy of nature.

Since the earth always has yielded productions necessary to supply the wants of man and beast, it is reasonable to believe it always will until it is

destroyed. But the evidence on which this belief is founded, and which, indeed, renders it reasonable, is the analogy of nature.

But is there any thing in the analogy of nature which affords evidence that mankind will all be happy in the world to come? What are the facts in nature from which their future salvation can be certainly inferred? Are they all happy now? Have they always been perfectly happy? If so, the analogy of nature certainly does afford an argument in favor of their future happiness. But if not, if pain and misery always have prevailed among them, why is it unreasonable to conclude (judging from the analogy of nature merely), that pain and misery probably always will prevail among them? The fact that pain and misery prevail among God's creatures now, proves irresistibly that they are not incompatible with his government. Why, then, is it unreasonable to conclude that they always will prevail, at least in as great a degree, as they always have done?

Will you tell me, that although mankind suffer pain and misery, in their present existence, yet there are certain principles of improvement in their condition which constantly tend to a better state; that the longer they live, the more knowledge they acquire and the more happy they become; and that in this way the operation of these principles will prepare them for complete and perfect happiness in the next period of their existence?

I answer. If this were a fact, and, the evidence of it clear, if the supposed principles of improvement in the present condition of human existence have a manifest and constant operation as has been supposed; if the longer men live the happier they become, and this were the case with them universally; it certainly would be reasonable to conclude that they will probably be happier in the next period of their existence. From the analogy of nature, we should conclude that their miseries probably will come to an end. The same mode of reasoning from the past to future, which would lead to the conclusion that they will suffer pain and misery in the world to come, would also, from this supposed fact, justify the belief that probably this pain and misery will eventually become extinct. We should expect they would suffer pain and misery in the future world, because they always had, in a greater or less degree, suffered them in this world. But according to the supposed fact, their pain and misery in this world had constantly diminished; so that if they could have stayed long enough here, their suffering continuing to diminish in its accustomed ratio, would eventually have become extinct. I see not but this would be a

fair argument.

But the argument fails because the supposed fact, on which it is founded does not exist. It is not true that mankind do grow happier, the longer they live. It is not true that their sufferings do universally and constantly diminish with the multiplication of their years. It is not true that extreme old age is the period of human life which approximates nearest to a state of perfection in happiness. No, this is not the period of earthly existence universally desired on account of its perfection of health, its freedom from perplexing care, and its exquisite relish for the pleasures of life. In these respects, the period of youth is evidently far preferable. The supposed fact, therefore, instead of being true, is actually the reverse, of truth. The conclusion must therefore be reversed.

How often do we hear persons say, that their childhood and youth have been far the most happy periods of their life! But, if there is a just foundation in human experience for the remark, it certainly furnishes an argument from the analogy of nature, very unfavorable to future happiness. If mankind are afflicted with pain and misery during all that part of their existence with which we are acquainted; and not only so, but this infelicity actually increases, and their situation in relation to happiness becomes more and more unfavorable the longer they live; if their capacity for happiness actually decreases, as they approach a future state, until their present life is terminated in the agonies of death; certainly, no argument from analogy can be hence drawn in favor of their future happiness.

Moreover, in the present state of existence, it is an obvious fact that the happiness and misery of mankind very much result from their own character and conduct. This is strikingly the case with the miseries of poverty, disease, and disgrace, which so uniformly overtake the idle, the intemperate, and the dissipated. And, indeed, almost every case of human misery on earth may be traced to some impropriety of conduct in the sufferer. But if improper conduct subjects to suffering in this life, it is certainly reasonable to suppose it will subject to the same calamity in the life to come. If a man who possesses an unholy, revengeful, and malicious disposition cannot be happy in this life, what reason have we to suppose that he can be happy in the life to come? Since mankind manifest very different dispositions and characters, and are evidently happy or miserable, very much according to this difference in the present

world, we have reason to expect that this will continue to be the case in the world to come.

But perhaps you will say, as many indeed have said, that all men become perfectly holy at the moment of death, and that this change prepares them for immediate and everlasting happiness. In answer, I would inquire what evidence you have for this opinion. Are you acquainted with any events in nature which are analogous to it? According to this opinion, thousands and millions who have lived all their days in sin, and actually become more and more hardened in iniquity, and perhaps closed their probationary life in some very daring act of wickedness, have been suddenly changed and prepared for heaven. This must have been the case with the inhabitants of the old world, who were destroyed by the deluge; with the inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrah, and the cities of the plain; with Pharaoh and his hosts; and even with the traitor Judas, the son of perdition. But have you ever known any events in nature which bear any analogy to this? With what sudden changes of this very favorable kind are you acquainted?

But perhaps you believe that the unrighteous will suffer a temporary punishment in the world to come, and that this will be the means of their conversion, and will prepare them for everlasting happiness. But, I ask again, where is the proof of your opinion? With what events are you acquainted which furnish evidence that such salutary effects will result from punishment in the world to come? Do such effects result from it in the present world? Is it a fact, that such is the constitution of nature, that punishment uniformly tends to make the wicked better? Is it a fact, that the more a criminal is punished, the more effectually he is reformed? Is this the case generally with Sabbath breakers, who have been prosecuted and fined for violating the sanctity of the Lord's day? Is this the case, too, with thieves, who have been publicly scourged for their larcenies? And do counterfeiters, swindlers, and perjurers descend from the ignominious pillory and come forth from the gloomy dungeon, evidently purified by the fire of their chastisement? This evidently is not the case. But if punishments do not convert the wicked in the present world, what evidence have we that they will do it in the world to come? We certainly have none from the analogy of nature.

But if the case were otherwise, and it could be proved that future punishment will inevitably produce repentance, it would by no means

follow that the damned will certainly be saved. If their punishment should humble and reform them, it would still be uncertain whether God would pardon and release them from suffering. In the present world we know he does not do it. Repentance and reformation do not prevent the evil consequences of past transgression. Health ruined, reputation blasted, and interest squandered, by intemperance and voluptuousness, we certainly know cannot be restored by mere repentance and reformation.

But if God's treatment of us in the future state will be of the same nature which we find it to be in this, what evidence can we have that repentance will procure a release from punishment then, which it does not procure now? Since we know that repentance does not stop the evil consequences of sin in this world, how can we know that it will stay the arm of avenging justice in the world to come? Since there are evidently cases in which crime and misery are so connected that repentance ever so sincere and reformation ever so complete cannot separate them in this world, how do we know that this will not be the case with sinners in the world to come? Most certainly the analogy of nature affords no such assurance.

On the one hand, it affords no assurance that punishment will certainly lead to repentance; nor, on the other, that, if it did, repentance would certainly lead to salvation.

But you say you rely with confidence on the goodness of God. You cannot believe that the unbounded goodness of the Creator is consistent with the final misery of any of his creatures.

I answer; if the unbounded goodness of God is inconsistent with the final misery of any of his creatures, why is it not inconsistent also with their present misery?

It is a fact, too obvious to be denied, that the goodness of God is not such as excludes evil from existence. If it were true that the goodness of God possesses this quality, there would be nothing felt among all his creatures, except uninterrupted and perfect happiness. Now, if this were the case; if no evil did exist in the world; if all rational beings were virtuous and happy; evidence of the continuance of such a state of things would be highly probable. If we observed and experienced nothing but virtue and happiness in the world, we should naturally conclude that evil probably never would be felt upon the earth. I say probably, because

even in this case we should not have positive proof. We should have no positive proof that evil did not exist somewhere; nor that it certainly would not be introduced among us. Merely not having evidence that evil would come, could not afford proof that it certainly would not come. It is possible that there may be some worlds in the universe where evil never has been known. Now the inhabitants of such worlds would have much better ground to infer from the goodness of God the universal happiness of rational beings, than we have. Yet such an inference would be infinitely erroneous. This our miseries loudly teach.

The fact is, the moment we allow the principle that a Being of perfect goodness cannot suffer the existence of evil among, his creatures, the inference becomes irresistible that the great Deity, the Creator of the world, is not a Being of perfect goodness. Or, if we adopt the principle that evil is not inconsistent with the perfect goodness of God, then we cannot infer, from the mere goodness of God, that evil will ever cease to exist. If infinite wisdom and goodness chose that a system of finite beings, embracing both good and evil, should exist, then we do not know that this kind of system will not continue to exist time without end. There is no principle of reason which evinces the contrary. For it is obvious that the continuance of evil cannot be any more contrary to the divine goodness than the present existence of it. The same argument, then, from the goodness of God to prove universal future happiness, will equally prove universal present happiness. The argument, therefore, is false because it contradicts fact. In reasoning from the goodness of God merely, we have as much evidence that all mankind are now, and always have been, perfectly happy, as we have that they ever will be. But we certainly know that God has not that kind of goodness which prompts him to make all mankind happy in this world; how then can we know that he has that kind of goodness which will prompt him to make them all happy in the world to come?

Our divine Creator has so constituted things that some men are virtuous and others wicked in this world; how then do we know that this will not be the case in a future world? He has constituted things so that some are happy and some are miserable in the present world; how then do we know that this will not be the case in the world to come?

The existence of evil in this world certainly proves one of two things; either the divine Creator is not perfectly good, or the existence of evil is

consistent with perfect goodness. If we allow the former inference to be correct, and suppose that the Deity possesses only a partial measure of goodness, we surely cannot know that he will make all men happy hereafter. For certainly the idea that God is only so far good as to make men partially happy in the present state is not enough to prove that he will make them all perfectly happy in a future state. But if we adopt the other inference, and allow that the existence of evil is compatible with perfect goodness in the Creator, we are then left without the least shadow of an argument that the goodness of God will ever exterminate sin and suffering. What is now consistent with the goodness of God, may be consistent with it millions of years hence, and even for ever. The mere perfect goodness of God, therefore, affords no evidence that evil will ever come to an end. It affords no proof that all men will be made permanently happy.

It is a fact, that such is the present constitution of things that some objects are pleasing to some men and displeasing to others; the same things which give happiness to some men, give disgust and misery to others. The plain and humbling doctrines of the gospel; the pure and spiritual worship of God; lively, ardent, and animated zeal in religion; these things give high joy and satisfaction to some, and occasion deep disgust to others. Now we have no evidence that this state of things will not continue for ever. The joys of heaven being purely religious joys, there is nothing unnatural or irrational in the idea that these things should give high joy and satisfaction to all those whose taste is prepared to relish them; and intolerable disgust and anguish to all those whose taste is opposed. So long as this is the present state of things, we have no evidence from reason that any essential alteration will take place in a future state. It is clear, therefore, that the analogy of nature or the light of reason affords no evidence, that all mankind will be happy in the world to come.

If, then, the light of reason affords no proof that all men will be happy in a future state, where shall we go for the requisite evidence? Shall we go to the Bible? Is it there to be found? Does the sacred volume clearly and decidedly teach that there is no such thing as evil in the world to come? That there is no danger of being hurt of the second death? Does it inform us so plainly that there is no danger of our being mistaken and deceived, that all sin and suffering will be hereafter completely destroyed and for

ever unknown? Do the oracles of the living God explicitly inform us that mankind, whether they repent or not, whether they believe or not, whether they are holy or not, will all assuredly attain to perfect happiness, when death has transmitted, them from time to eternity? If the inspired writers believed while they wrote, that mankind will all become finally happy, we should suppose they would have plainly expressed the sentiment. We should suppose they would have expressed themselves so plainly, that no persons would ever be in any doubt concerning their meaning. If all mankind will be finally made happy, then it is just as certain that the wicked will be happy in the world to come, as it is that the righteous will. And, if the inspired writers believed this, we should suppose they would have expressed their belief. And if they have expressed their belief that the wicked are as certain of final happiness as the righteous are, we should suppose they would have done it plainly. We should suppose they would have done it so plainly that no one would be in any danger of misunderstanding their meaning. We should suppose they would have been as plain and explicit, when they expressed their belief that the wicked will be finally saved, as they were when they expressed their belief that the righteous will be saved. Now it is a fact, that whenever the inspired writers speak of the future state of the righteous, they speak in a language which is so plain that no one can misunderstand their meaning. Indeed, the instance was never known of any person's entertaining any doubts whether the righteous in the world to come will be happy. Now, if the inspired writers believed that there is the same certainty that the wicked will be finally saved, why have they not expressed this belief in the same open, frank, and unequivocal manner? If they believed this doctrine and were honest, it is not seen why they have not done it. If they, believed that the wicked will be finally happy, why should they be any more liable to speak of their future state, in a way calculated to lead people to believe that they never shall be happy, than they were to speak of the righteous in that way? It is a palpable fact, that the Scriptures never, in a single instance, speak of the righteous in a way which can lead any one to suppose that they shall never be happy. It is also a notorious fact, that the Scriptures do uniformly speak of the wicked in such a way as has generally led people to believe that they never shall see life. Indeed, it is uniformly the case through the Bible, that the language which is used in describing the future state of the wicked, is directly the reverse of that which is used in application to the righteous. Now, how is this reconcilable with common

honesty on the part of the sacred writers, if they supposed that the wicked shall all be finally saved? On the ground that they believed such doctrine, there is a kind of double dishonesty running through the whole course of their writings. For it is a truth that they never have, in a single instance, plainly and explicitly expressed this belief. They have never once said that a wicked man, dying in impenitence and unbelief shall surely find mercy, or be eventually pardoned, or be finally restored. And the reason of this neglect has not been because they have never spoken of the death of the wicked, for they have often spoken of it. Here, then, is one part of the dishonesty. The other is whenever they speak of the death of the wicked, and the future state of the impenitent and unbelieving, they uniformly represent them as in a ruined and hopeless state. They assure us that "the hope of the wicked is as a spider's web," and "like the giving up of the ghost;" that "the hope of unjust men perisheth;" and that "when a wicked man dieth, his expectation shall perish." Now how can this language be reconciled with common honesty, if the writer of it at the time he wrote really believed that all the wicked shall in some future time be restored? One inspired writer assures us, that "He that being often reprov'd, hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy." But, how can this be reconciled with common honesty if the writer really believed that when the wicked are destroyed there shall be a remedy? The prophet Ezekiel denounced a woe against those who "strengthened the hands of the wicked, that he should not return from his wicked way by promising him life." Now where was the honesty of the prophet when he denounced this woe, if at the same time he believed that a promise of life might be truly made to the wicked? Indeed, if there was a just ground on which life, might be promised to the wicked, the woe would more justly apply to those who refuse or neglect to make them this promise. If the prophet had believed that the wicked should eventually see life, and had been honest, he would have said, Woe unto them who refuse or neglect to promise life to the wicked. But where do we find so much as a single passage in the whole Bible which is evidently of this import?

If the wicked shall in some future day be restored to the favor of God, Jesus Christ undoubtedly knew it. He, too, is a teacher to whom no one would wish to impute dishonesty. He was always frank, candid, and unequivocal in all his declarations. He was always willing to disclose the whole truth. He gave abundant testimony that the righteous shall be

saved. He spake on this subject so plainly that no one can misunderstand him. But has he with equal plainness declared that the wicked shall be saved? or that they shall be finally restored? The passages in which he has declared that the righteous shall be saved are almost innumerable. Will any one pretend that he has made this declaration as often concerning the final state of the wicked? But why should he not do it as often if the doctrine is true? Surely we need as much evidence to convince us that the wicked shall be finally saved, as we do to prove that the righteous shall be saved.

But why should I inquire for so many declarations of Christ concerning the final salvation of the wicked, when it is a solemn fact that there is not one. No, in all our Lord's discourses, in which he seemed to speak of every thing, there is not a single declaration to be found which promises life to the wicked. But, on the other hand, his discourses abound with contrary declarations; "that they shall be destroyed;" and that "where he goes they shall never come." And these awful denunciations are as numerous as his promises of life to the righteous. When we look for Christ's promises of life to the righteous, we find they are numerous. If we look to find, in his discourses, promises of life to the wicked equally numerous, we look in vain. If we look to find, in all his discourses, so much as a single promise of life to the wicked, we again look in vain.

But if we look for his denunciations of wrath against the wicked, and his unequivocal threatenings that they shall not see life, we find them in abundance. These we find quite as often, and quite as plain, as we do his promises of life to the righteous. Now, what is the evident and inevitable conclusion to be drawn from this fact? Supposing Christ to be an honest, candid, and faithful teacher of truth, what shall we conclude?

Let us look at a few of Christ's plain and candid representations of truth in relation to this subject, and see how they would be likely to appear to a candid and impartial bearer. We will begin with the parable of Lazarus the rich man.

"There was a certain rich man, which was clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day. And there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, which was laid at his gate, full of sores. And it came to pass that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom. The rich man also died, and was buried: And in hell he lifted up

his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom. And he cried, and said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me; and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame. But Abraham said, son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things; but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented. And besides all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed; so that they which would pass from hence to you cannot; neither can they pass to us, that would come from thence." Now if Christ may be considered a plain, honest, and candid teacher of truth, what must we understand from this representation? Would a candid and impartial hearer obtain an idea from it that there is any ground of hope for the wicked in a future world? Would he not rather obtain the idea that when the wicked die they have then received all their good things, even to a drop of water, which they ever can receive? Would not an impartial hearer understand the language of Abraham to the rich man as fairly implying all this! The rich man petitioned for a single drop of water. Abraham told him he could not have it. And then assigned two reasons why he could not. One was because in his lifetime he had received his good things. What an awful thought! that because he had received his good things he now could not any more receive any favor, no, not so much as a drop of water. And the other reason is equally awful and decisive. A great gulf was fixed between them, so that it was impossible for any one to pass. Now if we may suppose that Christ was honest and candid, and did not wish to make any wrong impressions on the minds of his hearers; nor to state things in a manner which would be liable to lead them into a belief of erroneous sentiments; what must we think of the representation in this parable? If our Lord had designed the parable for no other purpose than to give assurance that those who die in wickedness shall never be saved, or obtain any future favor, however small, I ask, how could he have represented this truth in a more forcible and plain and unequivocal manner?

The parable of the tares of the field is also equally explicit. "Another parable put he forth unto them, saying, The kingdom of heaven is likened unto a man, which sowed good seed in his field. But while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat, and went his way. But when the blade was sprung up, and brought forth fruit, then appeared the tares also. So the servants of the householder came and said unto him,

Sir, didst thou not sow good seed in thy field?. From whence then hath it tares? He said unto them, An enemy hath done this. The servants said unto him, Wilt thou then that we go and gather them up? But he said, nay; lest while ye gather up the tares, ye root up also the wheat with them. Let both grow together until the harvest, and in the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, Gather ye together first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them; but gather the wheat into my barn." That this important parable might be correctly understood, our Lord has himself, in his usually plain and honest manner, explained it. His explanation is this: "He that soweth the good seed is the Son, of Man; the field is the world; the good seed are the children of the kingdom; but the tares are the children of the wicked one, the enemy that sowed them is the devil; the harvest is the end of the world; and the reapers are the angels. As therefore the tans are gathered and burned in the fire; so shall it be in the end of the world. The Son of Man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them that do iniquity, and shall cast them into a furnace of fire; there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth." This explanation is so remarkably plain that all comment upon it is utterly needless.

In the parable of the supper also, Christ teaches in language most explicit, that all who slight the invitation, shall be for ever excluded. "Verily I say unto you, that none of those men which were bidden, shall taste of my supper."

In Christ's description of the day of judgment, he explicitly teaches the same truth. "When the Son of Man shall come in his glory and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory; and before him shall be gathered all nations; and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats, and he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left. Then shall the king say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you, from the foundation of the world. Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand; Depart from me ye cursed, into everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels. And these shall go away into everlasting punishment; but the righteous into life eternal." Now who can suppose, if Christ was honest and unwilling to mislead the people, that he would make such plain and pointed declarations concerning the future state of the wicked; and make them

too so often, and in fact make no other representation concerning their future condition; if at the same time, he believed that they all will be finally happy! The supposition is too absurd to be believed. Either Christ did not believe that the wicked who die in their sins will finally be saved; or, he did not honestly declare his sentiments. Indeed, the common manner of his preaching was such as actually made the impression on the minds of his hearers that the wicked will be finally destroyed, "and that without remedy." They who heard him, received the impression also that the number of those who will finally perish in their sins will be much greater than the number of the saved. His preaching, instead of leading them to think that he supposed all would be saved, was directly calculated to make them believe that he supposed but few would be saved. He preached, "Strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it;" but "Wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in there at." Preaching in this manner, it is not strange that people should believe he held that but few will be saved. Hence we read that one said unto him, "Lord, are there few that be saved?" Now, how unaccountable it must be if Christ preached that all will be saved, that any of his hearers should ask such a question! Lord, are there few that be saved? Who ever yet heard of any person's putting such a question to a Universal preacher? It was however, a very natural question to ask Christ. It was a question which the general tenor of his preaching was calculated to prompt. But let us see how he answered it. If he had preached in such a manner that his hearers had not clearly understood his meaning, here was a most favorable opportunity to make further explanation and correct their mistake. If he believed that all will be finally saved, here was a most favorable opportunity to make it known. It was, indeed, an opportunity which he as a teacher could not honestly avoid improving for the purpose. For, if, he had hitherto kept his sentiments on this point concealed, he was here brought to a trial--that must disclose them; or, he must absolutely refuse to answer an honest question; or, he must declare an untruth. For the very question is asked him, "Lord, are there few that be saved? Does he say no? The number saved cannot properly be called few. They are many. Does he say; By far the greater part will be saved? Does he say; All will eventually be restored? No, nothing like this. But his answer is directly the reverse. His answer is, "Strive to enter in at the strait gate;" that gate which, in another place, he declared but few find. For, says he, "many will seek to enter in and not be able." The many will

not be able. These are they that go in at the wide gate, leading to destruction. Now, who that believes, Christ was honest and acquainted with his subject can; suppose that he believed in universal salvation; or, in final restoration! Our Lord continues his answer still further. "When once the master of the house is risen up, and hath shut to the door, and ye begin to stand without and to knock at the door, saying, Lord, Lord, open unto us; and he shall answer and say unto you, I know you not whence ye are. Then shall ye begin to say, we have eaten and drunk in thy presence, and thou hast taught in our streets. But he shall say, I tell you I know not whence ye are; depart from me, all ye workers of iniquity. There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth when ye shall see Abraham and Isaac and Jacob, and all the prophets in the kingdom of God, and you yourselves thrust out."

But, perhaps you wish to know whether Christ is not the Saviour of the whole world?

I answer, yes; and he knew perfectly well how many of the whole world would embrace the salvation he offered, so as to be actually saved by him, and expressly assured us that the number of such is but few.

Do you ask, then, in what sense he can be called the Saviour of the whole world? I answer; in the same sense that a physician may be said to be the physician of a whole town when there is no other one, and this one; is abundantly able to do all the business if the people would apply to him; while at the same time one half of the sick have no faith in him and will not apply to him, and actually die for want of his help.

And now, reader, let me tell you; that Jesus Christ is your Saviour; but if you do not believe in him and make application to him for pardon, you must die in your sins, and perish for ever. On the authority of his own word I assure you, "He that believeth not shall be damned."

Finis.

